

Oklahoma

School Performance Review



Boise City Public Schools

Office of Educational Quality & Accountability

June 2019



OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL
QUALITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

June, 2019

Fellow Oklahomans:

The Office of Educational Quality & Accountability is pleased to present the Boise City Public Schools Performance Review upon the request of Boise City Public Schools (BCPS).

Boise City Public Schools (BCPS) has a number of commendable programs and enjoys support from district residents; however, it is faced with some challenges. The review contains recommendations to help BCPS meet those challenges and improve the efficiency of their operations. The review also highlights a number of “Commendable Practices” in programs, operations, and services provided by the administration, teachers, and staff.

We are grateful for the cooperation of BCPS board, administration, staff, parents, and students for their input into this review. The administration and staff are also to be commended for their dedication toward improving educational opportunities for all students.

We are pleased to announce that this review is available in hardcopy through the Office of Educational Quality & Accountability and on the office’s web site at www.oeka.ok.gov

Respectfully yours,

Dr. Daniel Craig
Executive Director

Oklahoma School Performance Review

Boise City Public Schools

June 2019



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Secretary of Education Michael Rogers, Chairman

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Phredd Evans

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Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Dr. Daniel Craig, Executive Director

Valarie Autry

Angie Bookout

Jennifer Gambrell

Jerry Shay

Renee Launey-Rodolf

Abby Murphey

Lecrecia Schmidt

Prismatic Services, Inc.

Tatia Prieto – President, Project Manager

Gary Gerber – Chapter 1 – Personnel, Management, & Communications

Loretta Schmidt – Chapter 2 – Instructional Delivery

Adam Steele – Chapter 3, Business Operations

Tom Martineau – Chapter 4, Facilities Use Management & Safety and Security

Donna Wittrock – Chapter 5, Child Nutrition

Pam Vreeland – Chapter 5, Technology

Gary Greenhill – Chapter 5, Transportation



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The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability supports high level student performance by ensuring quality evidence based educator preparation, improving P20 school efficiency and effectiveness, and providing comprehensive statistical information for all stakeholders.



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Executive Summary

The Oklahoma School Performance Review (OSPR) Program was authorized by the Oklahoma Legislature during the 2001 session, amended during the 2005 session, and amended again during the 2012 session. The responsibility to conduct school performance reviews was originally assigned to the Office of Accountability, which is now the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. The purpose of a performance review is to develop findings, commendations, and recommendations regarding (1) containing costs; (2) improving management strategies; and (3) promoting better education for Oklahoma children.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability began the performance review of Boise City Public Schools (BCPS) in November 2018. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability contracted with Prismatic Services to assist with the review. The Prismatic consulting team conducted individual and small group interviews with district personnel. The team also reviewed operations by touring facilities, observing cafeteria operations, and riding school bus routes. Administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and high school students completed confidential surveys. The consulting team tabulated the surveys and used the results in this review. Survey results are contained in **Appendices A** through **C**.

For comparison purposes, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability selected five Oklahoma school districts as peer districts based upon size, geography, and demographics. They are: Buffalo, Sentinel, Smithville, Tipton, and Turpin. These districts are called peer districts throughout this report.

For further comparison, a Community Group average is also used throughout the report. BCPS falls into community group G2, which includes districts with an Average Daily Membership (ADM) of between 250-499 students. The “2” indicates that the percentage of BCPS students eligible to receive free or reduced price meals is above the state average.

During this review, 83 recommendations were developed; they were designed to improve operations and support increased academic performance. In some cases, these recommendations should result in a net savings to the district, in some cases a net cost, and in some cases they should have no fiscal impact but should improve district efficiency or effectiveness. A detailed list of costs and savings by recommendation appears in **Exhibit 5**.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and Prismatic wish to express their appreciation to the Board of Education of; Boise City Public Schools, its Superintendent, Mr. Ira Harris, its principals, Mr. John Farmer, Mr. Bob Cochran, Mr. Garrett Harland, and the many district employees, students, parents, and community residents who supported and provided input for this review.

BOISE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Boise City, Oklahoma is the county seat of Cimarron County, the western most county in the Oklahoma panhandle. The city sits at the junction of the East/West Oklahoma Highway 412 and

the North/South U.S. Highway 287. Boise City covers 1,320 square miles and is estimated to have a current population of 1,240.¹ Boise City has experienced a slow decline in population since the year 2010. The school district operates two campuses that serves students from Pre-K through 12th grade.

In 2016-17, the fall enrollment in BCPS was 264, mostly Caucasian and Hispanic (**Exhibit 1**). More than half of BCPS students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Exhibit 1
Boise City Student Enrollment and Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2016-17

School	Grade Span	Fall Enrollment	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Two or More Races	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
Boise City Elementary School	EC-6	164	46.3%	0.0%	0.0%	50.6%	1.2%	1.8%	86.0%
Boise City Junior High School	7-8	31	45.2%	0.0%	0.0%	54.8%	0.0%	0.0%	67.7%
Boise City High School	9-12	69	40.6%	0.0%	1.5%	55.1%	0.0%	2.9%	59.4%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2 shows demographic changes over the last five years in BCPS. Over that time period, the average assessed property valuation per student increased by 53.2 percent, and eligibility for free and reduced-price meals increased by 0.5 percent. The average daily membership (ADM) decreased by 8.2 percent. At the same time, BCPS went from a majority Caucasian school to a majority Hispanic school.

¹ <https://oklahoma.hometownlocator.com/ok/cimarron/boise-city.cfm>

Exhibit 2
Boise City Change in Demographics from 2012-13 to 2016-17

School Year	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
2012-13	288	62.0%	0.0%	1.0%	37.0%	0.0%	\$97,770	77%
2013-14	286	58.0%	1.0%	1.0%	40.0%	0.0%	\$115,112	73%
2014-15	289	54.0%	0.0%	1.0%	44.0%	0.0%	\$131,022	77%
2015-16	292	51.0%	0.0%	0.0%	48.0%	1.0%	\$135,480	74%
2016-17	264	44.7%	0.0%	0.4%	52.3%	0.8%	\$149,738	77%
Change	(8.2%) ▼						53.2% ▲	0.5% ▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3 compares BCPS' demographics with its peers, the community group, and the state for 2016-17. BCPS had demographics similar to those of most of its peers, although the Hispanic population was notably higher than most of its comparison group and higher than the community group and state. The assessed property valuation in BCPS was the highest of all comparison entities. BCPS' percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals was the second highest of its peers.

Exhibit 3
Demographics of Boise City, Peer Districts, and State, 2016-17

Entity	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
Boise City	264	44.7%	0.0%	0.4%	52.3%	0.8%	\$149,738	77%
Buffalo	292	63.5%	0.3%	0.0%	33.5%	0.3%	\$75,974	65%
Sentinel	322	66.7%	0.6%	0.3%	26.2%	3.7%	\$127,041	68%
Smithville	283	54.5%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	44.5%	\$28,274	82%
Tipton	276	43.1%	7.1%	0.0%	38.7%	3.7%	\$31,464	72%
Turpin	433	45.6%	0.5%	0.2%	51.9%	0.0%	\$79,857	65%
Community Group	343	53.5%	2.3%	0.3%	7.0%	28.0%	\$52,187	77%
State	1,267	49.4%	8.8%	2.3%	16.8%	13.9%	\$49,471	63%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

The data in **Exhibit 4** reflect five-year ADM trends compared to the peers, community group, and state. BCPS had the third largest decline in ADM among its peers and decreased more than the community group and state.

Exhibit 4
BCPS, Peer Districts, and State Student ADM Trends

Entity	ADM					Percent Change
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Boise City	287.6	285.9	289.4	292.2	264.0	(8.2%) ▼
Buffalo	301.9	306.5	281.4	272.0	292.0	(3.3%) ▼
Sentinel	351.6	335.6	341.9	352.7	322.0	(8.4%) ▼
Smithville	290.0	299.5	282.1	280.0	283.0	(2.4%) ▼
Tipton	344.2	331.2	321.1	272.9	276.0	(19.8%) ▼
Turpin	408.0	425.7	428.3	447.0	433.0	6.1% ▲
Community Group	354.2	356.1	356.9	346.0	343.0	(3.2%) ▼
State	1,271.1	1,292.2	1,299.4	1,305.4	1,267.0	(0.3%) ▼

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

COMMENDATIONS

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability identified “exemplary” or “best practices” in Boise City Public Schools that led to 26 separate commendations. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability recommends that other school districts throughout Oklahoma examine these exemplary programs and services to see if they could be adapted to meet their local needs. The commendations are listed below and explained in detail in each chapter.

Chapter 1: MANAGEMENT, PERSONNEL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

BCPS has developed exemplary procedures for the efficient management of BOE meetings.

The superintendent is commended for working on a succession plan for his position in BCPS.

The superintendent is commended for developing an open accessible relationship with staff and parents.

The principals are commended for leading by example and being accessible to teachers, staff, and parents.

BCPS has developed and consistently implemented BOE policy review procedures.

BCPS is commended for its current counseling program and specifically the key role this individual plays in the secondary school setting.

BCPS is commended for its community involvement efforts.

Chapter 2: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEM

The district is commended for adopting a K-12 math series.

BCPS is commended for counseling services provided students.

BCPS librarians are commended for supporting the needs of teachers and students.

Chapter 3: BUSINESS OPERATIONS

BCPS is commended for getting the community behind their efforts and keeping them involved.

BCPS is commended for using a time clock for hourly employees to clock in and out.

BCPS requires all employees to participate in the use of direct deposit of pay warrants.

BCPS is investing unused cash in interest bearing accounts resulting in additional revenue.

The superintendent and encumbrance clerk are commended for providing the BOE a listing of all purchase orders for approval and a listing of checks for review monthly.

The superintendent and treasurer are commended for providing the BOE with bank account information and balances each month for review and analysis.

Chapter 4: FACILITIES USE AND MANAGEMENT

BCPS has developed an energy management program that works for their district.

Chapter 5: SUPPORT SERVICES

BCPS has developed a thorough process for approving applications for free and reduced meals, resulting in an approval rate that is higher than both the state and peer district average.

BCPS has instituted outstanding practices for the purchases of food in the school meals program by purchasing off the state bid and purchasing meat from local farmers.

BCPS is commended for hiring a full-time technology director.

BCPS is commended for using a consulting firm to assist with E-rate funding requests and documentation.

BCPS is commended for successfully securing funding sources and grants to support long-range planning in technology.

BCPS has a procedure to give the drivers continued safety training.

BCPS is commended for driving each bus route for safety and accuracy.

Contracting with the family to transport their student to school is saving the district money each semester and providing a stipend for the family to help cover an existing expense.

Purchasing the hydraulic brake bus has allowed coaches to drive to activity trips and not rely on the superintendent, high school principal and director of maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECTED COSTS AND SAVINGS

A list of recommendations with their associated costs or savings is provided in **Exhibit 5**. In each chapter, implementation strategies and the estimates of fiscal impact follow each recommendation in this report. The implementation section associated with each recommendation highlights the actions necessary to achieve the proposed results. Many of the recommendations have no costs or savings associated with them, but are designed to formalize, improve, and streamline operations. In some cases, the consulting team has made recommendations that will likely generate savings for the district, but in an effort to be conservative, no specific savings were estimated.

It must be understood that not all of the recommendations can be started at one time. The consulting team did not want to place priorities by indicating which recommendations should be implemented immediately and which ones implemented later. It will be up to the district to decide which ones to implement and the timelines for beginning implementation.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability recommends that the Boise City Board of Education ask district administrators to review the recommendations, develop an implementation plan, and monitor its progress.

Exhibit 5
Summary of Costs and Savings by Recommendation

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Chapter 1	Management, Personnel, and Communications						
1	Work to heighten community and staff awareness of the BOE's role in governing BCPS.	(\$2,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,000)
2	Establish a process for collaborative goal setting by the BOE with the superintendent to drive district performance in all areas.						\$0
3	Establish a superintendent evaluation process and instrument that is closely tied to goal setting by the BOE and the achievement of students.						\$0
4	Incorporate into board meetings occasional features of teachers, students, their special projects, and academic accomplishments.						\$0
5	Develop a succession plan policy and process for administrator positions, veteran teachers, and for non-teaching staff.						\$0
6	Expand the school counseling program at the elementary level where prevention can have the most impact, freeing the secondary counselor to focus on drug prevention and bullying at the junior high and high school.	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$225,000)
7	Establish a committee of stakeholders to review discipline policies and procedures.						\$0
8	Establish a strategic planning process that involves school and community stakeholders.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	(\$15,000)
9	Develop a district-wide committee that provides focus and recommendations regarding BCPS rural school sustainability issues.						\$0
10	Use a sign-in sheet to track those having access to the personnel files.						\$0
11	Develop strategies for retaining a qualified workforce and increasing the pool of highly qualified applicants for certified and non-certified staff positions.						\$0
12	Develop and implement an evaluation system, with input from support staff that will include the use of the approved evaluation forms already in policy, and a regular schedule for performance appraisal in order to maintain and enhance employee performance.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
13	Improve the availability of substitute teachers.						\$0
14	Remove barriers to timely and documented annual evaluations of staff.						\$0
15	Charge the professional development committee to develop a clearly articulated multi-year plan.						\$0
16	Expand PTA/PTO into the secondary schools.						\$0
17	Develop a systematic volunteer program in BCPS.						\$0
18	Develop new opportunities for parents to become engaged in school decision-making by utilizing short duration focus group activities at the school and district-level.						\$0
19	Improve the district’s website as an information resource for parents, students, and staff.						\$0
20	Develop a strategy for increasing parent conference attendance or participation.						\$0
21	Develop methods to enhance BCPS public relations activities.						\$0
22	Establish district level committees of stakeholders to discuss communication issues and to develop workable solutions that can be implemented for the 2019-20 school year.						\$0
	Subtotal	(\$52,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$50,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$242,000)
Chapter 2	Instructional Delivery System						
23	Develop and implement processes and procedures to horizontally and vertically pace and align the K-12 core curriculum.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$10,000)
24	Develop and implement a plan to annually evaluate curricular and instructional resources, software, enrichment, and remediation materials to ensure alignment with OAS and student learning needs.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$25,000)
25	Implement district-wide accountability procedures to ensure all OAS standards are taught, assessed, mastered, and paced with fidelity.						\$0
26	Develop and implement district-wide processes and procedures for administering criterion-referenced benchmark assessments to monitor progress and measure mastery of OAS.	(\$2,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$2,000)
27	Increase student achievement using differentiated instruction, innovative practices, and classroom engagement strategies.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
28	Implement a structured model or provide instructional delivery training to better serve ELLs.	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,000)
29	Implement a formalized, research-based, district-wide PLC process with regularly scheduled release time, standardized norms, and support structures for teachers to collaborate and focus on continuous school improvement.	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$5,000)
30	Implement a district-wide process for analyzing student performance data throughout the school year and use the analysis results to adjust curriculum and instruction.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,000)
31	Build the instructional leadership capacity of administrators.						\$0
32	Implement a tiered interventions model for remediation.						\$0
33	Implement ongoing, regularly scheduled time for teachers and instructional aides to cooperatively plan curriculum and instruction based on student Individualized Education Program (IEP).						\$0
34	Conduct a comprehensive review, update all local procedural aspects of the special education program, and then communicate the results to all BCPS staff.						\$0
35	Continue to strengthen the gifted program.						\$0
36	Explore the options for expanding regularly schedule counseling services to the elementary.	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,000)
	Subtotal	(\$22,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$47,000)
Chapter 3	Business Operations						
37	Adopt a formal policy for the district’s general fund balance that establishes a fund balance target range, provides guidance on how to maintain the minimum balance, and requires reports for fund balance status to the BOE.						\$0
38	Place special emphasis on the percentage of district funds being budgeted for student and instructional support during budget development and in future budget years establish a target percentage.						\$0
39	Include a variety of stakeholders in the budgetary process.						\$0
40	Develop desk procedures for each business services employee and establish a formal process for cross-training.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
41	Develop reports for the child nutrition fund that show fund balances, revenues, expenditures, and whether the program is making or losing money.						\$0
42	Develop and adopt fixed asset policies and procedures, such as capitalization thresholds, surplus procedures, and lost asset recovery; then, inventory fixed assets using a consolidated inventory listing.						\$0
43	Develop a standardized procedures handbook for all district activity funds to help ensure that funds are administered properly.						\$0
44	Account for all costs of activities within the same fund to provide a true picture of the revenues and associated expenses of each activity.						\$0
45	Implement an online school payment solution for activity funds and child nutrition funds to reduce fraud risk and provide a more efficient process for parents and the district.						\$0
46	Develop a process to solicit proposals for performing the district's annual audit and preprinting of the estimate of needs.						\$0
Subtotal		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Chapter 4	Facilities Use and Management						
47	Develop a long-range facility plan.						\$0
48	Develop and implement a preventive maintenance program.	(\$2,885)	(\$1,150)	(\$1,150)	(\$1,150)	(\$1,150)	(\$7,485)
49	Hire one additional maintenance technician.	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$150,000)
50	Implement a trade specific and safety training program in the maintenance department.						\$0
51	Inspect all facilities, documenting maintenance requirements, then prioritize the list and correct deficiencies.	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$1,000)
52	Hire two additional FTE custodians.	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)	(\$301,030)
53	Check and repair or replace weather-stripping.						\$0
54	Contract with a licensed fire alarm contractor and have them repair the system and provide an inspection tag that shows the system is operational.						\$0
55	Implement a standard response protocol and curriculum for lock downs.						\$0
56	Conduct an inspection of all facilities removing items that are blocking fire alarm panels, electrical boxes and emergency exit						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
	doors, or correct the deficiencies, and contact the Oklahoma School Security Institute for a free security assessment.						
57	Designate a safety manager for the district who is responsible for establishing safety programs and procedures in the district.						\$0
58	Provide SDS information at the point of use for chemicals and cleaning supplies.						\$0
	Subtotal	(\$94,091)	(\$91,356)	(\$91,356)	(\$91,356)	(\$91,356)	(\$459,515)
Chapter 5	Support Services						
59	Discontinue the open campus policy for all high school students.						\$0
60	Adhere to USDA policy regarding the promotion of competitive foods sources.	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$12,310
61	Obtain training for the child nutrition manager on a variety of topics regarding the school meals program.						\$0
62	Implement changes that will result in a more cost-effective food service program; at the same time, provide financial reports and training to the child nutrition manager.						\$0
63	Implement a combination of a reduction in labor hours and efforts to increase meal equivalents to yield higher productivity rates.						\$0
64	Implement strategies for increasing meal participation at the high school level.	(\$3,597)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$3,597)
65	Implement the available component of the current software provider to automate the process of on-line meal applications.						\$0
66	Install an extended sneeze guard on the serving line.	(\$350)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$350)
67	Implement a cross-training program that would ensure critical processes can be performed by multiple staff members.	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$7,500)
68	Create a technology committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents or students to develop and update the district's technology plan.						\$0
69	Complete and implement support procedures and a technology work order system that includes features such as logging, priority assignment, and completion.						\$0
70	Develop and implement an instructional technology plan in conjunction with the district's professional development plan.						\$0
71	Develop and test a disaster recovery plan that includes the district's critical data, systems, and programs.						\$0

	Recommendation	Estimated (Costs) or Savings					Total Five-Year (Costs) or Savings
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
72	Take steps to improve Internet access and reliability throughout the district.						\$0
73	Develop procedures to assess technology use and satisfaction with the goal of establishing higher use.						\$0
74	Adopt a formal inventory process and procedure for computers and other technology equipment that includes assigning new equipment and maintaining a record of all technology devices.						\$0
75	Adopt and fund a regular replacement cycle for technology assets.	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$100,000)
76	Continue the search for someone to accept the part-time transportation director position.						\$0
77	Review and document all turn-arounds on private property.						\$0
78	Develop an operations manual specific to student transportation.						\$0
79	Improve the procedure for checking buses for sleeping children.						\$0
80	Evaluate the cost and benefits of a video surveillance system on each school bus.	(\$4,038)	(\$2,692)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$6,730)
81	Track all repairs and fuel usage for each vehicle.						\$0
82	Address condition of the maintenance shop for safety violations.						\$0
83	Address the condition of some of the buses.						\$0
	Subtotal	(\$27,023)	(\$21,730)	(\$19,038)	(\$19,038)	(\$19,038)	(\$105,867)
	Total savings	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$12,310
	Total costs	(\$197,576)	(\$175,548)	(\$167,856)	(\$162,856)	(\$162,856)	(\$866,692)
	Total net savings and costs	(\$195,114)	(\$173,086)	(\$165,394)	(\$160,394)	(\$160,394)	(\$854,382)

School Performance Review reports are typically lengthy and densely packed with information. They can at first be overwhelming to district stakeholders. For that reason, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability has identified the most likely “tipping point” recommendations for each area reviewed. These are recommendations that the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability believes are the most important to implement and most likely to have the greatest organizational impact.

Of the 83 recommendations made, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability believes these seven recommendations to be the most critical:

- **Develop a district-wide committee that provides focus and recommendations regarding BCPS rural school sustainability issues.** Currently, BCPS is facing a number of sustainability issues, which many rural districts face. Implementing some rural school sustainability strategies can improve enrollment. A committee representing all stakeholders should develop recommendations with a timeline to determine what short- and long-term planning and actions is needed.
- **Develop and implement processes and procedures to horizontally and vertically pace and align the K-12 core curriculum.** The district has no on-going process to ensure curriculum is horizontally and vertically paced and aligned. With no horizontal and vertical content curriculum guides and pacing calendars, neither is there an instructional plan outlining foundational student-centered outcomes for critical thinking, technology skills, goal setting and organizational skills, and communication. These gaps are obstacles to improved student performance. Aligned curriculum maps identify the skills, content, and pacing period for all OAS skills and content.
- **Place special emphasis on the percentage of district funds being budgeted for student and instructional support during budget development and in future budget years establish a target percentage.** Currently, the percentage of funds expended on student and instructional support is low. By not receiving additional revenues from bonding, BCPS has had no other choice but to support a much broader array of expenditures from its general fund than would normally be expected. The superintendent should analyze historical expenditures and establish recommended budget targets for board approval in order to increase funding percentages for student and instructional support.
- **Contract with a licensed fire alarm contractor and have them repair the elementary fire alarm system and provide an inspection tag that shows the system is operational.** The elementary school does not have a working fire alarm system. The inoperable fire panel violates the health and safety requirement regarding building code compliance and emergency warning and prevention systems. The superintendent should contact the districts’ fire service contractor to arrange for them to make the repairs to the fire panel and inspect the system so an inspection sticker can be affixed to the panel stating it is operational.
- **Discontinue the open campus policy for all high school students.** The district’s open campus policy for high school students has a negative financial impact on the child nutrition program. The school environment is an important sphere in the development of dietary

behavior. The district should form a task force comprised of administrators, parents, and high school students to develop strategies around elimination of the open campus policy.

- **Implement a cross-training program that would ensure critical processes can be performed by multiple staff members.** The district has only one full-time staff member to support technology, supplemented by one consultant for its network. To assist with basic troubleshooting at the sites, the district should implement a cross-training program for teacher technicians. Having sufficient technical support is critical to successful technology use, both in classrooms and in administrative offices.
- **Address the condition of some of the buses.** There were some safety and mechanical issues that need to be addressed. Several defects were not reported by means of the Daily Inspection Sheet, and repairs or cleaning that had not been done. The State of Oklahoma requires drivers to complete a daily record of the condition of the bus and report any defects. The maintenance director will need to ensure that all standards of performance on vehicle readiness and required documentation is complete before and after a vehicle is placed into service.

Chapter 1:

*Management, Personnel, and
Communications*

Chapter 1

Management, Personnel, and Communications

This chapter addresses the management, personnel, and communications of Boise City Public Schools (BCPS) in the following sections:

- A. Governance
- B. Organization and Management
- C. Planning and Evaluation
- D. Personnel Management
- E. Community and Parent Involvement
- F. Communications/Public Relations

The organization and management of a school district involves cooperation between elected members of the board of education (BOE) and staff of the district. The BOE's role is to establish goals and objectives for the district in both instructional and operational areas, determine the policies by which the district will be governed, approve the plans to implement those policies, provide the funding sources necessary to carry out the plans, and evaluate the results of the plans.

Once the BOE adopts goals and objectives for the district, it is the responsibility of the superintendent and staff to establish administrative policies and procedures to achieve the desired results. That achievement involves recommending the hiring and retention of employees, as well as ongoing communication with the community to ensure a clear understanding of the goals and the district's efforts to accomplish them.

Background

Boise City, Oklahoma is the county seat of Cimarron County, the western most county in the Oklahoma panhandle. The city sits at the junction of the East/West Oklahoma Highway 412 and the North/South U.S. Highway 287. Boise City covers 1,320 square miles and is estimated to have a current population of 1,240.¹ Boise City has experienced a slow decline in population since the year 2010. The school district operates two campuses that serves students from Pre-K through 12th grade.

In 2016-17, the fall enrollment in BCPS was 264, mostly Caucasian and Hispanic (**Exhibit 1-1**). More than half of BCPS students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

¹ <https://oklahoma.hometownlocator.com/ok/cimarron/boise-city.cfm>

**Exhibit 1-1
Boise City Student Enrollment and Socioeconomic Characteristics, 2016-17**

School	Grade Span	Fall Enrollment	Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Two or More Races	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
Boise City Elementary School	EC-6	164	46.3%	0.0%	0.0%	50.6%	1.2%	1.8%	86.0%
Boise City Junior High School	7-8	31	45.2%	0.0%	0.0%	54.8%	0.0%	0.0%	67.7%
Boise City High School	9-12	69	40.6%	0.0%	1.5%	55.1%	0.0%	2.9%	59.4%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 1-2 shows demographic changes over the last five years in BCPS. Over that time period, the average assessed property valuation per student increased by 53.2 percent, and eligibility for free and reduced-price meals increased by 0.5 percent. The average daily membership (ADM) decreased by 8.2 percent. At the same time, BCPS went from a majority Caucasian school to a majority Hispanic school.

**Exhibit 1-2
Boise City Change in Demographics from 2012-13 to 2016-17**

School Year	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
2012-13	288	62.0%	0.0%	1.0%	37.0%	0.0%	\$97,770	77%
2013-14	286	58.0%	1.0%	1.0%	40.0%	0.0%	\$115,112	73%
2014-15	289	54.0%	0.0%	1.0%	44.0%	0.0%	\$131,022	77%
2015-16	292	51.0%	0.0%	0.0%	48.0%	1.0%	\$135,480	74%
2016-17	264	44.7%	0.0%	0.4%	52.3%	0.8%	\$149,738	77%
Change	(8.2%) ▼						53.2% ▲	0.5% ▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 1-3 compares BCPS’ demographics with its peers, the community group, and the state for 2016-17. BCPS had demographics similar to those of most of its peers, although the Hispanic population was notably higher than all of its peers and higher than the community group and

state. The assessed property valuation in BCPS was the highest of all comparison entities. BCPS' percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals was the second highest of its peers.

**Exhibit 1-3
Demographics of Boise City, Peer Districts, and State, 2016-17**

Entity	ADM	Ethnic Group					Average Assessed Property Valuation per Student	Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals
		Caucasian	Black	Asian	Hispanic	Native American		
Boise City	264	44.7%	0.0%	0.4%	52.3%	0.8%	\$149,738	77%
Buffalo	292	63.5%	0.3%	0.0%	33.5%	0.3%	\$75,974	65%
Sentinel	322	66.7%	0.6%	0.3%	26.2%	3.7%	\$127,041	68%
Smithville	283	54.5%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	44.5%	\$28,274	82%
Tipton	276	43.1%	7.1%	0.0%	38.7%	3.7%	\$31,464	72%
Turpin	433	45.6%	0.5%	0.2%	51.9%	0.0%	\$79,857	65%
Community Group	343	53.5%	2.3%	0.3%	7.0%	28.0%	\$52,187	77%
State	1,267	49.4%	8.8%	2.3%	16.8%	13.9%	\$49,471	63%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

The data in **Exhibit 1-4** reflect five-year ADM trends compared to the peers, community group, and state. BCPS had the third largest decline in ADM among its peers and decreased more than the community group and state.

**Exhibit 1-4
BCPS, Peer Districts, and State Student ADM Trends**

Entity	ADM					Percent Change
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Boise City	287.6	285.9	289.4	292.2	264.0	(8.2%) ▼
Buffalo	301.9	306.5	281.4	272.0	292.0	(3.3%) ▼
Sentinel	351.6	335.6	341.9	352.7	322.0	(8.4%) ▼
Smithville	290.0	299.5	282.1	280.0	283.0	(2.4%) ▼
Tipton	344.2	331.2	321.1	272.9	276.0	(19.8%) ▼
Turpin	408.0	425.7	428.3	447.0	433.0	6.1% ▲
Community Group	354.2	356.1	356.9	346.0	343.0	(3.2%) ▼
State	1,271.1	1,292.2	1,299.4	1,305.4	1,267.0	(0.3%) ▼

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

A. GOVERNANCE

Oklahoma state education laws, as codified in the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) and district policies, establish the powers and responsibilities of the district BOE and the superintendent. The School Law Book contains 1,469 sections numbered consecutively and each section provides legal guidance for school district governance and operations. The information provided in **Exhibit 1-5** reflects sections relevant to BOE organization and basic governance principles.

**Exhibit 1-5
OSC: BOE Governance and Organization**

Topic	Section
School District – Definition	8
School System – Administered by State Department of Education, etc.	17
Positions in School System – Definitions	18
General Fund – Definition	22
Building Fund – Definition	23
State Board of Education – Powers and Duties	32
Governing Body of School District	123
Independent and Dependent School Districts – BOE – Members Election	125
Expansion of Board	126
Workshops for New Board Members – Expenses of Members Attending	127
Relation by Affinity or Consanguinity Prohibition	129
Employment of Relative of Member of BOE	130
Excluding Litigious Board Member from Proceedings	131
School District Treasurer – Assistant Local Treasurer	132
Local Treasurer – Surety Bond – Duties – Cash Investment Ledgers	133
Oath of Office	135
Requirements for Bonds for Employees and Officers	136
Powers and Duties	138
Meetings of Board – Executive Sessions – Compensation of Members of Boards of Districts with ADA Exceeding 15,000 or Population Exceeding 100,000	148
Officers of Board	149
President – Duties	150
Vice President – Duties	151
Clerk – Duties	152
Oklahoma Open Meeting Act	787
Executive Sessions	793

Source: Oklahoma School Law Book, 2015

Powers and duties of the BOE are contained in Section 32 of the School Law Book. These powers and duties cover all activities related to operating public school districts. Key powers and duties include:

- election of officers;
- establishing board policies;
- building and operating schools and related facilities; and
- contracting for an annual audit of all district and school activity funds.

Section 126 addresses the size and election of BOEs in Oklahoma, and Section 149 provides a description of the required officers for BOEs. The board consists of five members, each of whom is elected to a five-year term. **Exhibit 1-6** reflects the year elected and the next election date for each board member.

Exhibit 1-6
Boise City BOE Members

Board Member	Board Position	Year of Election or Appointment	Term Expires
Billy Mizer	President	2015	2020
Alan Shields	Vice President	2016	2021
Tom Twyman	Clerk	2014	2019
Tracy Brown	Member	2017	2022
Nathan Crabtree	Member	2018	2023

Source: BCPS, January 2019

The district holds board elections each February. The board members swear in elected members and vote on officers at the next meeting. Sections 157, 158, and 159 list the duties of each officer of the BOE. The board must elect a new clerk, who may or may not be a member of the board.

Section 127 outlines the training requirements for BOE members. Within 15 months following election, new BOE members are required to complete 12 hours of instruction on education issues in the areas of:

- school finance;
- legal issues (employment, due process, new laws, the *Oklahoma Open Records Act*, and the *Oklahoma Open Meeting Act*); and
- duties and responsibilities of district BOE members (including special education and ethics).

The 12 hours must include one hour of instruction in school finance, one hour of instruction in the *Oklahoma Open Records Act* and the *Oklahoma Open Meeting Act*, and one hour of instruction in ethics. The remaining hours may be satisfied by attending a two-day workshop to

be held by the SDE or other workshops held by another organization or association approved by the Oklahoma State Board of Education. Re-elected board members are required to complete six hours of instruction within 15 months of re-election in the same education areas. The remaining hours may be satisfied by attending a workshop, class, or seminar addressing the education issues set forth above for new members.

Board of Education Meetings

The Boise City BOE meets on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 pm in the high school meeting room. The meeting place and time may be changed by agreement of a majority of the board members. Special meetings are held as needed, and board members receive agendas and any supporting information in advance of the meeting. The district's mission statement is included in the BOE policy book (**Exhibit 1-7**).

Exhibit 1-7 Mission Statement of Boise City Public Schools

- Boise City Schools have the responsibility to meet the educational needs of all students by providing an equal opportunity, fostering lifelong learning, and preparing students to participate in a democratic society.
- The Boise City BOE believes that each student has a right and responsibility to succeed, to achieve to the limit of his or her ability and to take pride in his or her achievements.
- It is believed that every student is entitled to respect and dignity as an individual.
- The board recognizes that achievement of educational excellence is a joint effort of the school, the home, and the community.
- It is also recognized that education is a life-long process in which individuals of all ages can and should acquire new skills.
- The board believes that each student should graduate with marketable skills and a solid foundation upon which future skills can be built.

Source: Boise City BOE policy book, 2000

FINDING 1-1

Interviews and surveys suggest the actual role of board governance and its relationship to planning and policies in association with the superintendent is not understood. This can impact the ability of the BOE to act in its appropriate capacity as a governing agent.

Exhibit 1-8 reflects parent and staff survey results concerning how the public currently views the role of the Boise City BOE. The majority of staff and parents either had *no opinion* or *disagreed* with the survey statements regarding whether BOE members understand the needs of the district

or listen to the opinions of parents or community members. That answer is typically seen where individuals feel they do not have enough information to answer the question.

Exhibit 1-8
Parent and Staff Survey Results Regarding the BOE

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parent	BOE members listen to the opinions and desires of parents and community members.	6%	31%	31%	24%	8%
Parent	BOE members know and understand the educational needs of students in the district.	9%	33%	24%	28%	6%
Staff	BOE members listen to the opinions of parents and community members.	14%	32%	38%	11%	5%
Staff	The BOE understands the needs of the school district.	14%	27%	38%	16%	5%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

The community focus group perception is that because many BOE members do not have children in the schools they, therefore, have less understanding of district problems. BOE members stated that the community tends to view them as the complaint department regarding staff. This perception is a common problem in many school districts, but working directly with staff is the role of the superintendent, not the BOE. It seems that there is a lack of understanding regarding the board's governance role in the school district.

Providing information that highlights the board's involvement in decision-making and explaining the board's role in governance is a best practice. As an example, the Colorado Association of School Boards provides a review on the "Standards for Effective School Boards"² that can assist the board members with understanding their next steps.

RECOMMENDATION

Work to heighten community and staff awareness of the BOE's role in governing BCPS.

The superintendent and BOE should work collaboratively to accomplish the following:

² <https://www.casb.org/Page/356>

- discuss and properly identify the roles that each play regarding management and oversight of the school district; and
- publish the roles to all stakeholders.

Working through the process of establishing roles is never easy due to common misconceptions, personal bias, and the circumstances and reasons that individuals have followed to assume their respective roles. To eliminate confusion and misunderstandings, using a board development consultant may be necessary and timely. With a new superintendent pending in BCPS, now is the time to get the roles defined. Once the new superintendent is selected the outgoing superintendent can set up a board workshop in the early summer and coordinate with the consultant and the new superintendent.

An experienced trainer can provide background and skills for the school board and the new superintendent in a five-hour day. The Oklahoma State School Boards Association (OSSBA) has experienced trainers that can provide this workshop for BCPS.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of this training depends on how it is customized for BCPS, but generally the total for a day of training is \$2,000 and the training can be customized to meet district needs.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Complete whole board development training.	(\$2,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 1-2

The goal setting process involving the superintendent and the BOE needs improvement. The most recent goal setting process consisted of the superintendent selecting goals to achieve and bringing the goals to the BOE for review. The experience of the current superintendent lent credibility to this approach and board members have been mindful of not getting into the business of operating the school district.

Goals set more collaboratively with give and take discussions between the superintendent and BOE can serve to guide BCPS improvement and provide both the board and superintendent with a focus for planning. A collaborative discussion and setting of district goals is not over-reaching for the BOE. Rather, it enriches the goal setting process by bringing the perspective of parents, community leaders, and other patrons to the attention of the elected BOE.

A recent study published by the Center for Public Education cites eight characteristics of effective school boards.³ Paramount is the establishment of goals and collaboration with the superintendent and BCPS stakeholders. **Exhibit 1-9** shows the eight characteristics and the

³ CPE. (2011, January 28). *Eight characteristics of effective school boards: At a glance*. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Public-education/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards>

assessment the consulting team found regarding whether Boise City’s BOE processes meet each characteristic. The setting of goals is the trigger for all other effectiveness indicators in this analysis.

The effectiveness indicators were examined for BCPS through review of BOE interviews, community focus groups, and survey results, as well as superintendent and principal interviews. The processes of the Boise City BOE meet one and partially meet the remaining seven effectiveness standards.

**Exhibit 1-9
Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards**

Characteristic		BCPS
1	<p>Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectation for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishing “non-negotiable” goals (goals that all staff must act upon once set by the board) in at least two areas: student achievement and instruction goals. b. Having the board align with and support district goals. c. Monitoring goals for achievement and instruction. d. Using resources to support achievement and instruction goals. 	Partially Present
2	<p>Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about possibilities for students and their ability to learn the system and its ability to teach children at high levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Board members consistently expressed their belief in the learning ability of all children and gave specific examples of ways that learning had improved as a result of district initiatives. b. Poverty, lack of parental involvement, and other factors were described as challenges to be overcome, not as excuses. c. Board members expected to see improvements in student achievement quickly as a result of initiatives. d. Comments made by board members were indicative of the differences in high-achieving versus low-achieving schools. In a high-achieving district, for example, comments might include: “This is a place for all kids to excel.” Another might be, “Sometimes people say the poor students have limits. I say all have limits. I believe we have not reached the limits of any of the kids in our system.” 	Partially Present
3	Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.	Partially Present
4	Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communication structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.	Partially Present
5	Effective boards are data savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.	Partially Present
6	Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.	Partially Present
7	<p>Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a trusting and collaborative relationship between the board and superintendent; b. creation by the board of conditions and organizational structures that allow the superintendent to function as the chief executive officer and instructional leader of the district; c. evaluation of the superintendent according to mutually agreed-upon procedures; and d. effective communication between the board chair and superintendent, and among board members. 	Present
8	Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.	Partially Present

Source: Adapted by Prismatic, February 2013

RECOMMENDATION**Establish a process for collaborative goal setting by the BOE with the superintendent to drive district performance in all areas.**

The superintendent and BOE should be involved in joint training designed to teach processes for establishing district goals. A robust process includes:

- an analysis of the school district condition to examine both strengths and weaknesses. This can be annualized through a superintendent's annual report. A performance review would be a great platform to launch the development of goals;
- the goals are established and implemented in which they are improved upon for a specific period of time (i.e., school year);
- the board monitors goal achievement progress through reports provided periodically by the superintendent and others. At the end of the year the board should have a follow-up discussion of goal achievement progress. Many districts schedule a follow-up annual retreat for the board, superintendent, and other key administrators. The agenda is limited to discussions of goal achievement and adjustments for the next year;
- additional meetings may be needed until the planning process becomes systemized as an annual undertaking by the board and superintendent;
- district performance should be targeted to utilize the goals in strategic planning in all areas of operations and academic achievement; and
- communicate the goals and plans to all levels of the organization and the community.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources

FINDING 1-3

The superintendent's evaluation instrument has not been revised in several years and a refreshed format is advisable. In interviews with BOE members, they expressed an interest in looking at options for the superintendent's evaluation. Developing an evaluation process that is linked to collaborative goal setting with the new superintendent is timely and should prove most effective for the BOE.

RECOMMENDATION**Establish a superintendent evaluation process and instrument that is closely tied to goal setting by the BOE and the achievement of students.**

There are many methods for evaluating a superintendent (**Exhibit 1-10**). A performance appraisal system is likely the best option and places the superintendent's evaluation in closer alignment with new systems being utilized to evaluate principals and teachers.

Exhibit 1-10 Methods for Evaluating a Superintendent

- **Checklist or Rating Systems.** This is the most common method of evaluating the superintendent. Typically, it is a numerical rating system to quantify the performance of the superintendent. For example, 5 is Excellent, 4 is Good, 3 is Fair, 2 means Needs Improvement, and 1 is Poor.
- **Written Essay.** This evaluation process relies on written essays by each board member that identify the strengths and weaknesses of the superintendent's performance. The key to the success of this approach is that board members focus on being constructive in their analysis.
- **Objective Analysis.** This evaluation process requires the superintendent – with the board's assistance – to develop a plan for what he or she plans to accomplish in the coming year. Included in the plan is the timing of monitoring reports that the superintendent will provide to the board.
- **Performance Appraisals.** This evaluation process mixes the rating and checklist system and the objective analysis. It is becoming more popular because it helps translate board policy and the written work plan, with a scalable system of measuring the superintendent's performance.

Source: <https://www.superintendentofschools.com/resources/the-superintendents-evaluation-toolbox/>

However, final decisions on the instrument to be utilized and other aspects of the evaluation should be determined jointly by the BOE and the superintendent. The BOE and the superintendent will need agreement and a similar comfort level with the instrument and the process. The process to be followed for the superintendent's evaluation may look something like the following general example (**Exhibit 1-11**).

Exhibit 1-11
Example of Superintendent's Evaluation

- **Evaluation Instrument.** It should be filled out individually by each board member. The summary of the individual board members' evaluations are compiled by the board chair or president and distributed to each board member prior to the evaluation session.
- **District Goals and Priorities.** The board chair or president should compile all written evaluation documents and distribute them to the other board members.
- **Superintendent Employment Contract.** This is reviewed in relation to the accomplishment of the established goals of the evaluation. The contract becomes more relevant when the board considers the status of the superintendent's employment.
- **Superintendent Evaluation Policy and Procedures.** The board can check if policy and procedures have been followed.
- **Other Relevant Documents.** All other documents are supplied as needed.

Source: <https://www.superintendentofschools.com/resources/the-superintendents-evaluation-toolbox/>

The superintendent's evaluation should be conducted at a separate board meeting. It should focus on performance goals and priorities, with the superintendent presenting his or her accomplishments and areas that need improvement, as well as identifying the circumstances that prevented the accomplishment of goals. In the meantime, board members should identify the strong points of a superintendent's performance, areas for improvement, and any priorities or goals that the board wishes the superintendent to focus on. Board members should also review the contractual implications of the evaluation. For example, some options might include rolling the contract for an additional year, freezing the contract, and/or discussing a remediation program and plan of improvement (**Exhibit 1-12**). This timeline reflects the level of cooperation needed between the BOE president and the superintendent in order to accomplish the evaluation in a timely fashion.

**Exhibit 1-12
Timeline for the Superintendent Evaluation Process**

Timeline	Action
July – August of upcoming year	1. Superintendent and board set goals for the evaluation. 2. Superintendent and board clarify vision and mission and update long-range plans for the district. 3. Board and superintendent review superintendent’s previous evaluation, job description and the evaluation process, forms and cycle timelines to be used next year.
January	4. Superintendent reports interim progress on district goals to the board.
February	5. Superintendent decides to use the 360-degree evaluation, prepares questions, selects individuals to participate, distributes the forms, collects and collates the results to be shared with the board. 6. Board members complete Parts 1 and 2 of the superintendent evaluation form. 7. Board members meet to discuss their evaluations and develop the board’s official written evaluation document(s) that will be shared with the superintendent. 8. Superintendent completes a self-assessment of the evaluation form Parts 1 and 2.
By March 15	9. Board and superintendent meet to discuss and clarify the results of the evaluation documents. Changes to the evaluation may be made as a result of the discussions. Evaluation meetings may be held in executive session. 10. A copy of the final written evaluation form is placed in the superintendent’s personnel folder. 11. As soon as evaluation is complete, the results of the evaluation are shared with the community. 12. Return to the beginning of the cycle. ⁴

Source: Created by Prismatic, April 2014

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. OSSBA can provide an evaluation instrument or the district can acquire a commercially available instrument, such as the Marzano District Leader Evaluation.⁵ If the district decides to implement a commercial instrument, there will be a cost.

⁴ http://osba.org/en/Resources/Article/Board_Operations/Superintendent_Evaluation.aspx

⁵ <http://www.marzanocenter.com/District-Leader-Evaluation/>

FINDING 1-4

Observation, review of documents, and interviews indicate that the BOE meetings are handled legally and efficiently in BCPS. The easy relationships and cooperativeness between and among board members are also apparent.

The BOE meetings are consistently organized and efficiently operated. The BOE agendas are posted appropriately. Agenda items include reports on academics and activities. The BOE minutes are posted online for the public. The superintendent provides the board a packet of relevant material prior to the meeting and an oral report at the meeting. Secondary principals are called upon to give an oral report to keep board members up to date on the district. The superintendent provides regular financial reporting to the BOE.

The school district utilizes a computer application called “Assemble” to handle meeting details and the meeting is conducted using a SMARTBoard. The methodology and preparation displayed by BCPS is exemplary and beyond the paper and pencil meeting that is typical in many BOE meetings that the consulting team has observed. The use of technology provides a model for staff and students reflecting to them that the BOE and administration is willing to be lifelong learners where technology is concerned.

COMMENDATION

BCPS has developed exemplary procedures for the efficient management of BOE meetings.

FINDING 1-5

Interviews with board members suggests that at board meetings they receive a lot of information on the general welfare of the institution and current events, but little information on academic goals and progress. Board members indicated a desire to improve board meetings and to do more to publicly recognize teachers for their efforts. Currently, the board agendas reflect that superintendent and principals deliver reports to the board. The consulting team observed a board meeting and noted that the high school principal tried to talk to each of his teachers and find out what they wanted the board members to know. Additionally, a review of past agendas reflected reports given by the high school principal on dropouts and high school remediation. The junior high school principal also gave a report on what was happening at his level of the district. The superintendent gives reports in each board meetings on the current business of the school district.

There does not appear, based on BOE agendas, to be any regular effort of teacher/student recognition for special projects and achievements related to academic performance. The consulting team has observed BOE meetings in school districts of all sizes and the positive attitudes created from the practice of recognizing teachers and students for academic accomplishment cannot be understated.

RECOMMENDATION

Incorporate into board meetings occasional features of teachers, students, their special projects, and academic accomplishments.

This activity should be completed in BOE meetings at least once quarterly. Implementing this recommendation requires the identification of teacher/student academic accomplishments both in extra-curricular activities such as the academic team and in stem classes, technology classes, leadership classes or other classes doing special academic projects. It might be a student or group of students with exemplary test scores, placing in an academic competition or having perfect school attendance. Principals can help identify the teachers/students to be invited, and parents should be invited by the teacher. At the board meeting, the principal introduces the teacher for a few brief comments about the activities and then the teacher introduces the students. At the end of student introductions, the BOE stands, shakes hands with the teacher and students, and hands each student a special recognition certificate signed by all BOE members.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-6

The superintendent has been involved in an informal succession planning effort regarding his retirement. Succession planning is especially valuable in circumstances where the district is rural and the pool of available applicants for executive jobs is small. This work should smooth the transition to the next superintendent.

The superintendent mentioned that both before and early in his tenure at BCPS the principal positions were like a revolving door. The problem of recruiting principals to Boise City prompted the superintendent's succession planning effort.

The succession planning effort by the superintendent is exemplary. It is rarely found at all in large or small school districts. The smooth transition afforded by succession planning can be effective in driving the district forward rather than losing ground during the acclimation period of new staff.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent is commended for working on a succession plan for his position in BCPS.

FINDING 1-7

There is, at this time, no formal succession planning for veteran staff such as front office support, and no formal plans for replacing veteran teachers. There is no cross-training program for non-teaching staff, which could help not only succession planning but also prepare the district for staff suddenly becoming ill or requiring surgery. Certain areas, like payroll, are essential. Interviews and focus groups indicated that there is a concern regarding veteran teachers and being able to replace that knowledge and experience when the time comes. Replacing veteran staff is particularly important in small school districts where teachers and non-teaching staff perform a variety of functions other than their main job. Those secondary job assignments also have to be filled when someone leaves.

Thoughtful and deliberate planning for changes in teachers, non-teaching staff, and leadership is needed in order to avoid organizational chaos and instability. Students and staff benefit from smooth transitions and agenda continuity. Short tenures are not helpful. Typical succession planning includes several elements:

- anticipate the district needs, considering growth factors, the economy, community, age of staff, likely retirements, financial resources, and timing. Determine both the district's short and long-range goals as an organization. Chart the district's vision for the future (strategically plan). Identify the type of leaders needed to get the district there and develop a profile of what the district is looking for in a leader;
- adopt the attitude that the district will search for teacher, administrative, and central office candidates proactively before a vacancy happens. Establish recruiting practices that help with this. These recruiting practices can range from advertising hard to find positions such as math, science, or special education before vacancies happen, to seeking intern teachers, partnerships with other organizations, shared teaching staff, outsourcing, and other techniques;
- provide for distributed leadership throughout the district's organization that recognizes and allows motivated individuals, no matter their position, to lead. Deepen the district's leadership pool by creating a bench of experienced staff who assume leadership. In certain area, such as teachers chairing committees;
- once potential leaders are identified, mentor/coach them and continue to give them opportunities to experience leadership;
- provide for overlap of tenures to allow the new person to benefit from training next to the person that is leaving. The longer the time they have together, the better the outcome. Practical experience is the best training; and
- annually evaluate the district's planning for succession.⁶

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a succession plan policy and process for administrator positions, veteran teachers, and for non-teaching staff.

Succession planning is a relatively new concept in education and key staff may need to research it and perhaps acquire some training. When the point of comfort with the concepts is reached, a more formalized succession planning effort could take place, which includes board policy and gathering specific information concerning veteran staff and their many responsibilities. As succession plan policies and activities are developed a review by the district legal counsel is also appropriate.

⁶ Hanover Research. (2014). *Best practices in succession planning*. Retrieved from <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Best-Practices-in-Succession-Planning.pdf>

The superintendent or his designee should develop a committee to address succession planning for all veteran school staff. Timing on this should coincide with efforts to profile the district and its needs in a strategic planning process. Lastly, the district does not have to enter full-blown succession planning to benefit from some of its concepts. Those include:

- identifying potential leaders based on what they voluntarily do such as chairing committees or leading professional development;
- regarding key staff, clearly identifying all of the things specifically that they do and, more importantly, how they do them;
- selecting staff for cross training in key job duties in the event that a key staff member is out for an extended time;
- providing necessary cross training;
- searching for replacement staff before vacancies happen and creating a potential employee list; and
- broadening the opportunities in BCPS for staff to voluntarily take on leadership roles.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

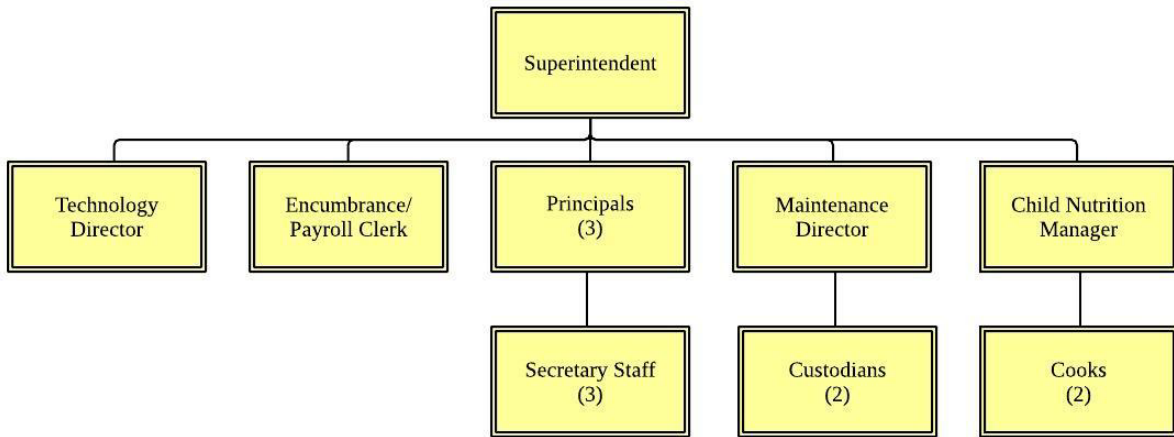
B. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The superintendent of a school district serves as the chief executive officer and is the administrative leader responsible for policy implementation and day-to-day operations. An effective central office organizational structure is essential to the efficient delivery of services throughout a school district. Efficient central office organizational structures have the appropriate spans of control for district leadership with clearly defined lines of authority that are reflected in the district's organizational chart. Effective central office structures encourage communication at all levels.

Exhibit 1-13 reflects the current organizational structure for BCPS. As currently configured, the district has three principals. This was an increase from the two principal positions the district previously had, but was an intentional increase by the superintendent, as part of succession planning. The plan proposed by the superintendent suggests that the number of principals will go back to two after the new superintendent is named. That plan is somewhat contingent on the BOE choosing a local option for its new superintendent. As noted on the district's certified staff listing for 2018-19, all of the principals carry a teaching load in addition to having administrative duties.

At the time of the onsite review, the district lacked a position responsible for transportation. Instead, transportation responsibilities were divided among several individuals.

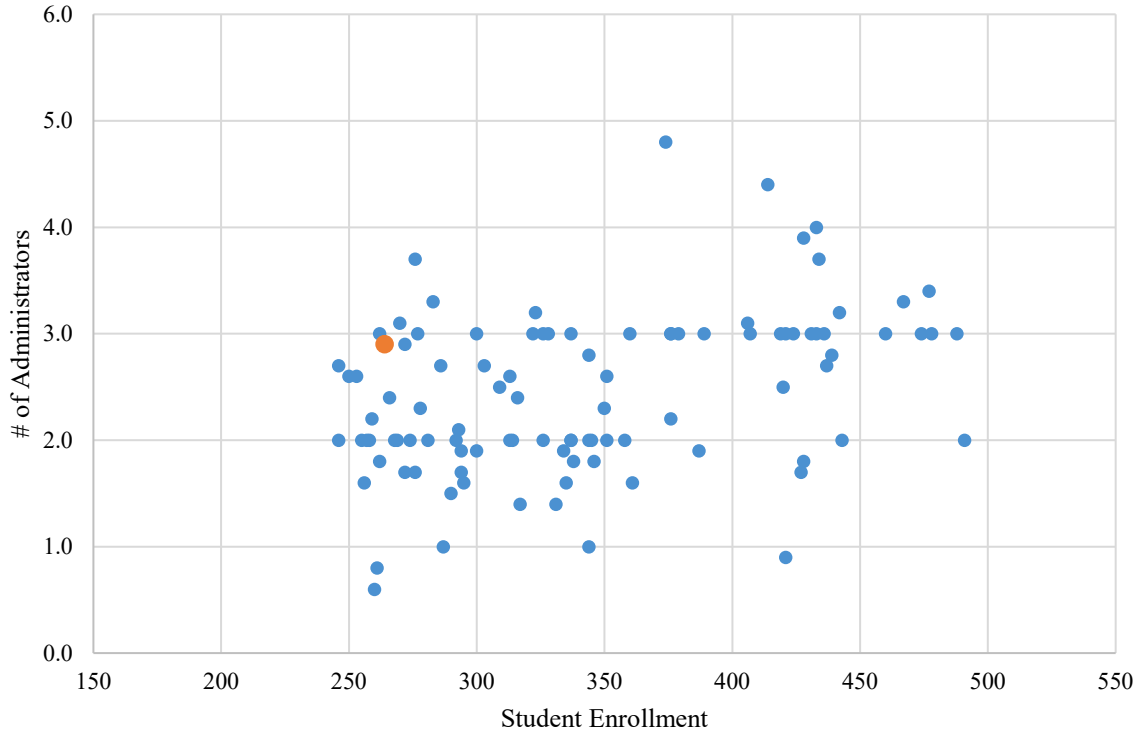
Exhibit 1-13
BCPS Organizational Structure



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2019

Exhibit 1-14 compares the number of administrative positions with student enrollment for all 101 of the G2 districts. The BCPS data point is shown in orange. As shown, BCPS’ 2016-17 administrative staffing of 2.9 positions is in line with many peers and below that of several. The current staffing of 3.9 positions would be the highest of the G2 districts with less than 300 students.

Exhibit 1-14
Administrative Staffing as a Function of Enrollment
All G2 Oklahoma School Districts, 2016-17



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Using the 2016-17 data, the ratio of administrators to teachers was in the middle of the peers (**Exhibit 1-15**). The cost of administration was the second highest among its peers (**Exhibit 1-16**).

Exhibit 1-15
Comparison of Teacher and Administrator Staffing, 2016-17

Entity	ADM	Number of Administrators (FTE)	Number of Classroom Teachers (FTE)	Ratio of Teachers to Administrators
Boise City	264	2.9	20	7:1
Buffalo	292	2.0	22	11:1
Sentinel	322	3.0	25	8:1
Smithville	283	3.3	20	6:1
Tipton	276	3.7	17	5:1
Turpin	433	3.0	34	11:1
Peer Average	321	3.0	24	8:1

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 1-16
Administrative Expenditures Comparison, 2016-17

Entity	ADM	Number of Administrators	Total Salary	Administrator Cost per Student
Boise City	264	2.9	\$240,013	\$909
Buffalo	292	2.0	\$152,730	\$523
Sentinel	322	3.0	\$251,049	\$780
Smithville	283	3.3	\$250,648	\$886
Tipton	276	3.7	\$256,010	\$928
Turpin	433	3.0	\$244,530	\$565
Peer Average	321	3.0	\$230,994	\$719

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 1-8

The superintendent's leadership style has been described as available and knowledgeable while being supportive and positive with all staff. In interviews with staff and focus groups, the superintendent is described as smart, and a problem solver not afraid to pitch in and do any work that is needed.

Exhibit 1-17 reflects the survey results regarding the superintendent. Among staff, 86 percent view the superintendent as accessible and 60 percent feel that he communicates with them effectively. Among parents, 47 percent indicated that the superintendent is a respected and effective leader.

Exhibit 1-17
Staff and Parent Survey Results Regarding the Superintendent

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The superintendent is accessible to district staff.	35%	51%	8%	5%	0%
Parent	The superintendent is a respected and effective leader.	13%	34%	27%	16%	9%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

COMMENDATION

The superintendent is commended for developing an open accessible relationship with staff and parents.

FINDING 1-9

All three BCPS principals demonstrate a willingness to support the district community. In interviews and focus groups, all of the principals have been described as striving to develop positive relationships with students, teachers, and staff.

All three of the principals mentioned in interviews that they are rarely in their offices preferring instead to be out in the halls and visiting classrooms. The staff survey seems to support this activity as 73 percent of the staff responded that principals are accessible. Among parents, 83 percent indicated that district staff, such as principals, is accessible (**Exhibit 1-18**).

**Exhibit 1-18
Staff and Parent Survey Results Regarding the Principals**

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The principals are accessible to their staffs.	27%	46%	5%	16%	5%
Parent	District and school staffs are accessible to parents.	19%	64%	11%	4%	4%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

The consulting team observed both secondary school principals frequently in the halls interacting with students. Additionally, the collaboration between the junior high and high school principals to provide coverage for one another seems outstanding. The high school principal teaches a shop/welding class, serves as a volunteer assistant coach in two sports and handles all non-schedule-based transportation activity requests from teachers. The junior high school principal teaches three high school science classes and works as the receiving agent for the school. Both secondary principals regularly fill in on teacher absences.

The elementary principal drives a bus when necessary, helps with coaching when they are short-handed, and subs as needed in classrooms. Teachers stated that he always pitches in and help when people are absent in the cafeteria or cleaning is needed, and the custodians are gone for the day. Notably, he is in the lunchroom every morning to greet students.

COMMENDATION

The principals are commended for leading by example and being accessible to teachers, staff, and parents.

FINDING 1-10

The superintendent brings both new policies and adjusted policies regularly to the BOE. This helps ensure that the district is up to date and in compliance with new or changing legal requirements.

The consulting team reviewed seven board meetings from 2017 through August 2018 and found seven policies were acted upon. Policies are available online and three copies are kept in the central office for anyone who wants to review a hard copy.

This regular review of policies is a best practice for several reasons. Each time a legislative session concludes, new bills impact school systems. When new health and/or safety concerns arise, boards are well served to protect themselves, their staffs, and students by adopting policies and procedures that address the actions to be taken and, when indicated, which district positions

should be responsible. This helps them with prevention planning and protects the BOE members and educators from legal liability. The National School Boards Association, in one of its publications, discusses the impact that not following policies has on districts, underscoring the importance of having current relevant policies.⁷

COMMENDATION

BCPS has developed and consistently implemented BOE policy review procedures.

FINDING 1-11

The current secondary school counseling program is exemplary. The counselor plays a strong role in career/college readiness and prevention activities.

The consulting team observed students in the counselor’s office filling out college materials. **Exhibit 1-19** reflects survey results from staff and students regarding the school counseling program. It is rare that the consulting team finds such high agreement in surveys on counseling programs.

Exhibit 1-19
Staff and Student Survey Results Regarding the School Counseling

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The district provides students with adequate counseling services	35%	52%	0%	13%	0%
Staff	Students receive timely information on college entrance requirements and scholarship offers.	48%	52%	0%	0%	0%
Student	I have received sufficient college and career counseling.	13%	40%	23%	23%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

In the area of prevention, the counselor calls on absent students to reduce absenteeism and works with the city police to do wellness checks at student homes. She also manages an anti-bullying phone application called “Stop It.” She related that students keep her informed about what is going on at school and home, and she feels that she is aware of the “pulse” of the school. Additionally, teachers keep her informed often by dropping by to make sure she has heard of a particular situation(s) that have arisen with students.

The school counselor meets and surpasses SDE standards for counseling programs. Her involvement in the school and relationship with students can help students feel secure and that

⁷ Day, D.R. & Boyce, S.P. (2008). A board policy conundrum: Can board policy create liability? *National School Boards Association*

they have someone who can be trusted other than their immediate teachers. The prevention aspect of the counselor’s relationships is obvious.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for its current counseling program and specifically the key role this individual plays in the secondary school setting.

FINDING 1-12

The elementary school lacks a full range of counseling services for students. Oklahoma high schools and middle schools are required to have one full-time counselor for every 450 students, a standard which BCPS meets. At the elementary level, a counseling and guidance program is required, but does not have to be delivered by a certified counselor.

The American School Counselor Association recommends a staffing level of one counselor for every 250 students (regardless of level). The actual ratio in Oklahoma in 2015-16 was 430:1.⁸ At a current enrollment of 264, BCPS is above the national recommendation (250) and below the Oklahoma average (430).

The district’s one counselor runs a counseling group at the elementary level, but does not provide other counseling activities, such as a prevention curriculum. Interviews and focus groups, suggest that drugs, specifically marijuana, continue to be a concern at BCPS. Bullying was also identified as a concern, in both online and in-person environments.

Survey results reflect the extent of identified student needs based on data from staff, parents, and high school students (**Exhibit 1-20**). As shown, sizeable percentages of each stakeholder group believe that bullying and drugs are problems in the district.

**Exhibit 1-20
Parent, Student, and Staff Survey Results Regarding Student Needs**

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parent	Bullying is a problem in this district.	12%	30%	25%	28%	5%
Student		8%	21%	37%	24%	11%
Staff		3%	62%	0%	31%	3%
Parent	Drugs are a problem in this district.	22%	30%	26%	20%	2%
Student		14%	35%	35%	11%	5%
Staff		19%	68%	0%	10%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

Effective school counseling programs are collaborative efforts benefiting students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the overall community. School counseling programs should be an integral part of students’ daily educational environment, and school counselors should be

⁸ <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/Ratios15-16.pdf>

partners in student achievement. Counseling programs at the elementary level that emphasize character, good decision-making, and resilience can have a positive impact on bullying behavior and drug abuse. Additionally, counselors if given enough time can work more closely with community supports, and programs to reduce the impact of drugs and bullying on families.

RECOMMENDATION

Expand the school counseling program at the elementary level where prevention can have the most impact, freeing the secondary counselor to focus on drug prevention and bullying at the junior high and high school.

The superintendent and elementary principal should work together to find a counselor who is a good fit with the students and the community. Ideally, they will find someone who is equipped to handle the challenging social and developmental needs of elementary students while also helping the administration manage the academic programs.

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates that an elementary counselor position for the elementary school will require approximately \$45,000 in salary and benefits. Because the district has a high free and reduced lunch count and a high Hispanic count the superintendent should research whether federal funds could be utilized for some of the cost in the next budget.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire an elementary counselor.	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)	(\$45,000)

FINDING 1-13

The district is perceived to have an inconsistent approach to discipline. In interviews, surveys, and focus groups discipline inconsistency was noted as an issue.

Exhibit 1-21 provides the survey results on student discipline. While overall survey results concerning discipline were good, a sizeable percentage of parents and staff did not feel that discipline issues are handled well.

**Exhibit 1-21
Staff, Parent, and Student Survey Results Regarding Student Discipline**

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	Student discipline is well-maintained.	10%	50%	0%	40%	0%
Parent	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered at my child’s school.	5%	46%	19%	21%	10%
Student	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered in this school.	16%	39%	29%	11%	5%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

Additionally, there were several survey comments by parents and students, as well as focus group and interviews comments by teachers with a similar theme regarding discipline. The general theme was that there are no district standards enforced regarding student discipline infractions and consequences. Stakeholders perceive that consequences sometimes depend on who your parents are and that attendance, truancy, and dress code policies are inconsistently applied. It is difficult for stakeholders to know all of the circumstances that lead to different disciplinary consequences for the same or similar school policy violations, but the perceived lack of consistency is a concern.

There are student discipline policies in the BOE policy book. There is also a teacher handbook and it refers to a discipline handbook. That discipline handbook however, was missing from documents provided to the consulting team. The district had little documentation available regarding the enforcement of rules and specific reasons for various punishments given, so the consulting team could not document whether there was a factual basis for stakeholders’ perceptions.

The hallmark of any disciplinary plan is fairness, documentation, and consistent application of disciplinary consequences. The perception of uneven or even unfair application of consequences can often lead to litigation or civil rights investigations.

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a committee of stakeholders to review discipline policies and procedures.

Teachers should be represented in discussions and the representative should be nominated and voted onto the committee by teachers. A feedback loop to other teachers should be established either by minutes kept of the meetings and shared or a time set up for the teacher representative to share results with the teachers as a group. Students must be respected and specific students should not be identified when discussing discipline events and consequences. Parent representation is also a good idea for any district-wide committee.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. *PLANNING AND EVALUATION*

Planning, evaluating, and correcting strengths and weaknesses through practice and re-teaching is common in the lexicon and repertoire of educators. However, planning and evaluation takes on a different meaning when it involves planning for change in a large entity like a school district. In that case, there is a need to strategically plan when and how to change the district for the improvement of the student learning experience.

To be effective, a strategic plan must lay out key milestones to measure progress, establish a priority ordering of the items to be accomplished, provide a timeline for which each item is to be accomplished, and assign accountability for each item to a specified position in the school district's organization. Finally, the organization must provide periodic reports on the status of the plan's implementation and any changes that must be made due to changes in circumstances or changes in assumptions.

According to Cook (2000), strategic planning requires total concentration of the organization's resources on mutually pre-determined measurable outcomes.⁹ Strategic planning allows an organization to have a clear focus on what it is doing and what it intends to do based upon established and monitored goals. A strategic plan will include long-term goals, which typically can be achieved in five to ten years. Short-term goals, which typically can be achieved in a year, must support the attainment of the long-term goals.

FINDING 1-14

There is not a long-term strategic planning process in place for BCPS. The superintendent has been focused on budget survival in these uncertain times in Oklahoma. The superintendent, principals, and BOE have discussed the long-term health of the school district, but planning and evaluation of the district remains an informal process with only immediate administrators involved.

In 2007, Reeves summarized his work, which analyzed hundreds of strategic plans across 20 dimensions, controlled for school demographics, and compared student achievement to a baseline year.¹⁰ The study found that substantially higher achievement was realized if strategic plans included:

- monthly monitoring of student performance, teacher strategies, and leadership practices;
- continued self-evaluation by teachers and administrators regarding every program initiative and strategy; and

⁹ Cook, Jr., W. (2000). *Strategies: The art and science of holistic strategy*. Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books.

¹⁰ Reeves, D.B. (2007). Leading to change/making strategic planning work. *Educational Leadership*, 65(4).

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- attribution by teachers and leaders that their work is the fundamental cause of student growth rather than demographics.

Reeves concludes, that school leaders must decide whether the strategic planning process is focused on achievement and therefore adds value. All too often, organizations develop strategic plans that are broad statements with no ties to specific goals. For example, a school district may establish a goal of “improving student performance” without setting a target or identifying the strategies it plans to employ to achieve the desired outcome, or even fully defining “student performance.” A better goal would be “improving student achievement by 10 percent from last year to this year as measured by state standardized testing.” The district would then identify the means by which this goal would be achieved, such as through additional small group instruction with benchmark testing to monitor progress.

According to the Balanced Scorecard Institute:

There are many different frameworks and methodologies for strategic planning and management. While there are no absolute rules regarding the right framework, most follow a similar pattern and have common attributes. Many frameworks cycle through some variation on some basic phases:

1. analysis or assessment, where an understanding of the current internal and external environments is developed;
2. strategy formulation, where high level strategy is developed, and a basic organization level strategic plan is documented;
3. strategy execution, where the high level plan is translated into more operational planning and action items; and
4. evaluation or sustainment/management phase, where ongoing refinement and evaluation of performance, culture, communications, data reporting, and other strategic management issues occur.¹¹

The graphic in **Exhibit 1-22** explains the logic of the balanced scorecard approach to strategic planning.

¹¹ <http://balancedscorecard.org/Resources/Strategic-Planning-Basics>

Exhibit 1-22 Balanced Scorecard Approach



Source: Balanced Scorecard Institute,¹² September 2008

More strategic planning in all areas of BCPS operations can assist in efforts to improve student academic achievement, address facility needs, establish appropriate roles and responsibilities for staff members and clarify perceptions and the goals of the BOE.¹³ Most importantly, communicating the goals and plans to all levels of the organization and the community will promote a positive perception that the board understands the needs of the district. A successful, forward-looking school district is the best method of attracting students and quality teachers.

RECOMMENDATION

Establish a strategic planning process that involves school and community stakeholders.

This performance review may provide a basis for more long-term planning and an opportunity to broaden the range of people involved in planning. That can help ensure the continued positive district growth.

A strategic planning process can start with an annual superintendent's report to the board of the school district in all its many facets. The basic steps for a strategic planning effort are:

- The superintendent convenes an internal administrative staff planning group. Decides who will chair the main committee and/or serve as liaison to the group.

¹² <http://www.balancedscorecard.org/BSCResources/TheNineStepstoSuccess/tabid/58/Default.aspx>

¹³ https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://search.yahoo.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1014&context=iped_techrep

- Establish a BOE approved strategic planning committee heavily weighted to include teachers and parents. As many as two of the BOE members can serve if so desired.
- Develop a committee meeting schedule and open the meetings to the public. Develop agendas and reports that provide detailed data regarding strengths and weaknesses of the district to the committee and public. Each operational and instructional area should be included.
- Provide the committee with demographic studies.
- Establish sub-committees to dig into data as necessary and have them report back to the main committee with findings.
- Develop a vision statement.
- Develop short- and long-range goals for the district. Convert these goals into action steps.
- Assign staff to implement action steps.
- Determine how to evaluate the progress.
- Develop follow-up and review procedures.

Once a strategic plan is established, a follow-up annual retreat, attended by the board, superintendent, and other key administrative staff, should be scheduled in order to review the district’s progress and adjust goals accordingly. Such a review may include creating more specific short-term goals that support established long-range goals. Short-term goals should be “SMART”: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Boise City BOE and superintendent can undertake the process of launching the strategic plan process. This approach to planning has no fiscal impact.

Alternatively, the district may want assistance in working through a strategic planning process. This approach will have a fiscal impact. The BOE can issue a request for proposals and enter a contract for services. Based on BCPS’ size and complexity, an estimated cost for facilitating this process would be around \$15,000. This is, of course, a negotiable fee which would include meetings with stakeholders, follow-up, and production of documents. Lastly, in the third year of strategic plan development, a communication strategy would be developed, including print ready public relations documents, and a final print ready strategic plan document. This three-year phasing equally distributes the cost but could also be done quicker if desired.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Develop a strategic plan.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0

FINDING 1-15

The district is facing a number of sustainability issues. In focus groups and interviews, all expressed concerns about the declining student population, difficulty attracting teachers, worn out facilities, the lack of community support for improving facilities, and low expectations for students by parents and some teachers. Many rural districts face the same challenges.

Citing statistics from the National Center for Education and a report by the Rural School and Community Trust, the Center for American Progress issued a report on how community schools can reinvigorate rural education (**Exhibit 1-23**).

Exhibit 1-23
Ideas for Reinvigorating Rural Schools

- Prepare children to learn through providing daycare, preschool, Head Start, and early childhood programming in co-located facilities with the elementary program.
- Extend learning opportunities beyond the school day and beyond tutoring to provide assistance to students for developing skills in problem solving, analyzing, generating new ideas, and teamwork.
- Provide for real life experiential learning opportunities in theaters, museums, recreation centers, or libraries. This could involve providing transportation to these locations or bringing visiting museum programs to the school.
- Find a way to stay open extended hours, weekends, and in the summer in order to provide learning opportunities to children. For example, keep the library open extended hours or open the gym for community recreational activities and camps.
- Provide co-located services at school for families including health, social, and emotional services.
- Partner with other private and public agencies to provide services. Seek grant funding from public and private sources.
- Include parents in planning, decision-making, and implementation.

Source: Williams, D. (2010). The rural solution: How community schools can reinvigorate rural education. Center for American Progress

Stabilizing enrollment is a quandary for many rural school districts. Citing statistics from the National Center for Education and a report by the Rural School and Community Trust, the Center for American Progress issued a report titled “The Rural School Solution How Community

Schools Can Reinvigorate Rural Education.”¹⁴ **Exhibit 1-24** provides a set of ideas drawn by the consulting team from this report that could provide a basis for action in BCPS.

Exhibit 1-24
Rural School Sustainability Ideas

Area	Strategies Used to Promote Stable Enrollment
General Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to multi-grade classrooms. • Open facilities to serve community functions. • Switch to four-day school week (where distance to school is a problem).
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide special in-service opportunities. • Create partnerships with other schools. • Employ teachers with multiple certifications. • Pass a local levy.
Fiscal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain bids and comparison pricing on all purchases. • Join a consortium of schools to leverage purchasing. • Cooperate with other districts for specialized personnel. • Promote the school’s reputation. • Increased student count thru approaches such as all-day Kindergarten.
Distance Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use for professional development. • Use for student enrichment. • Offer Advanced Placement classes online.

Source: Morton, C. & Harmon, H. (Fall 2011). Challenge and sustainability practices of frontier schools in Montana. Rural Educator, 1(13).

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a district-wide committee that provides focus and recommendations regarding BCPS rural school sustainability issues.

To implement this committee all stakeholders in the community should be represented, including BOE members, business owners, ranchers, parents, teachers, retired teachers, school administrators, and support staff. This committee should develop recommendations and present those in a BOE meeting to determine what short- and long-term planning and action is needed. Also, a timeline should be established for activity completion and someone assigned to do each action step. The superintendent and BOE should follow up to see that action steps are being completed.

¹⁴ Center for American Progress: The Rural School Solution, How Community Schools Can Reinvigorate Rural Education. (September 2010) See at: <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2010/09/22/8376/the-rural-solution/>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources

D. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Personnel costs typically represent the largest expense in school districts. As a result, efficient and effective management of human resource functions is critical to the overall effectiveness of a district. In small districts, human resource functions are usually managed by the superintendent with clerical assistance. Typical tasks of a school district's human resources department include the following:

- recruiting employees;
- overseeing the interviewing, selection, and processing of new employees;
- retaining employees;
- processing promotions, transfers, and resignations;
- determining and maintaining compensation schedules;
- managing insurance programs;
- managing employee benefits programs;
- planning and forecasting personnel needs;
- maintaining complete employee records, including records on training and certification;
- developing and maintaining job descriptions, which would include establishing required job credentials;
- managing the employee evaluation process;
- handling employee complaints and grievances, including grievance procedures;
- developing personnel policies; and
- ensuring that the employer follows all laws and regulations.

To support the mission of a school district, it is important that these human resource functions be efficient, effective, and aligned to federal and state law. Like most employers, public school districts must comply with federal laws governing human resource management. These laws include:

- *Fair Labor Standards Act*, which governs wages and hourly payments;

- *Americans with Disabilities Act*, which requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to any employee or job applicant who has a disability; and
- *Equal Employment Opportunity Act*, which prevents employers from making hiring and firing decisions based upon age, race, religion, gender, or other factors not related to performance.

In addition, state laws govern school district human resource administration in areas such as grievances, due process, termination, and contract renewal. Personnel selection and retention are part of a continuous process necessary to ensure an experienced, quality teaching staff.

FINDING 1-16

Personnel files are secure. The file cabinets had locks and were kept behind a locked office door. The only area of concern regarding personnel files is that the district does not maintain a sign-in sheet indicating who has had access to the file.

The personnel file cabinets are fire-rated, which is best practice. Interviews suggest that the district acquired the cabinets at no charge from another county entity. The contents included in the files were consistent across the files reviewed. Interviewees were complimentary of the job done by the staff person in charge of personnel data management.

The district does not maintain a sign-in sheet indicating who has had access to the personnel files. Any staff person reviewing a file should sign in, including the superintendent, principals, contracted or state auditors, and state accountability staff.

According to the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) guidelines, personnel files and medical records are private documents and should be maintained in locked file cabinets in a secure location. Files should only be accessible to those people with a legitimate need to access the files. Special guidelines apply to securing and handling medical information obtained through medical examinations and tests.¹⁵ The *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* also requires that medical records be secured and accessible only for safety and health purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

Use a sign-in sheet to track those having access to the personnel files.

The sign-in sheet should include printed name, date, purpose, and signature of the person accessing the personnel file. The sign-in sheet should be kept on a clipboard on top of file cabinets holding records. Staff near the sheets may need to give a verbal reminder to sign in. A posted sign reminding those getting access to use the sign-in sheet will also likely be helpful.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

¹⁵ www.shrm.org

FINDING 1-17

Recruitment and retention of teachers has been identified in interviews, focus groups, and survey data as a problem for BCPS. Stakeholders believe it is a problem for several reasons:

- the district's location in the panhandle;
- the lack of variety in employment options in the community for spouses; and
- the lack of suitable housing.

Beyond the standard recruiting tools of posting listings of vacancies in various locations and media sources, there is no long-range plan for recruitment though it seems there is a general concern about having enough highly qualified applicants available. Similar to most districts, the retirement of veteran staff, both teachers and support staff, also presents concerns for BCPS.

A review of employment statistics illustrates the need for districts to develop recruitment and retention plans to maintain a quality teaching staff. The National Center of Educational Statistics, in a 2012-13 study, reported that of teachers leaving the profession, 6.3 percent of them said that they left for reasons of regarding their salary. From, 2011-12 and 2012-13, regarding public school teachers, 59 percent moved from one public school to another public school in the same district and 38 percent moved from one public school district to another public school district.

RECOMMENDATION**Develop strategies for retaining a qualified workforce and increasing the pool of highly qualified applicants for certified and non-certified staff positions.**

Planning and implementing an ongoing recruitment program is the responsibility of everyone in a school community. The superintendent should convene a recruitment and retention study team to:

- identify the strengths and challenges of recruitment and retention in the district;
- set short- and long-term goals for improving recruitment practices;
- ensure an organized approach to recruitment efforts;
- make sure that recruitment and retention becomes an ongoing priority for the district; and
- bring skills, knowledge, and energy to the district to implement successful recruitment and retention practices.

The committee should include a cross section of district personnel that represents teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, teacher association members, and retired educators. In addition, there should be representatives from the community that include board members, parents, business leaders, Chamber of Commerce leaders, civic organization representatives, and marketing and human resource professionals.

As a first step, it is essential for the committee to assess the district's strengths and weaknesses, identify trends, and determine the effectiveness of existing efforts to hire and retain certified educators. Data will help to verify and sharpen the committee's understanding of district needs and priorities for recruitment and retention. Data will also provide a foundation to plan and build a baseline to measure district efforts.

If the data shows that the district is challenged in attracting qualified applicants, the committee might explore what the New Hampshire Department of Education has identified as "promising strategies." These include:

- improve the image of your district through ongoing public relations and marketing;
- expand district outreach to reach more potential applicants;
- enlist community help in recruitment efforts;
- define the characteristics and skills of the ideal applicant and align recruitment strategies;
- strengthen relationships with institutions of higher education and teacher preparation programs;
- work on efforts to "grow your own" candidates and explore alternative certification opportunities; and
- identify incentives available for candidates that will attract and help retain quality educators.¹⁶

The committee should also review the 2015 report by the Oklahoma Teacher Shortage Task Force to identify recruitment and retention recommendations that can be modified or adapted. Examples of a few of the recommendations from the task force report that might be helpful to local planning include:

- target and recruit high school students, undergraduate students, mid-career professionals, and military personnel to enter the teaching profession;
- allow for retired teachers to serve in the role of mentor – the retired mentor would not be employed by the district;
- create a scholarship program to provide for a one-time scholarship for test takers;
- adopt and fund a teacher recruitment program, with matching funds from the business and education community; and

¹⁶ http://www.nheon.org/prof_dev/RetainRecruit/AS3Plan.html

-
- create a pilot program on different teacher/leader models that include mentors, lead teachers, or instructional coaches.¹⁷

Once the committee has determined key components of the plan, it might be helpful to use a planning template and explore the literature to compose the implementation strategies. These sample templates and planning resources can be of use:

- recruitment strategy template;¹⁸
- steps to building a recruiting strategy;¹⁹ and
- planning the steps in your recruitment.²⁰

In developing and implementing an effective recruitment plan, it is important that the committee is conscious of how the district is perceived externally. For example, is the culture of the district attracting applicants? Are teachers included in all aspects for the recruitment and selection process? Are district teachers included in job fair recruitment and on interview committees? Teachers can be the best recruiters.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-18

The district does not have a personnel evaluation system for support staff. As a result, employees do not receive consistent feedback to enhance their performance and have limited opportunity for formal supervision.

In interviews and document review, the consulting team did not see evidence of a consistent plan of evaluation for support staff, nor a format for the evaluation activity even though the evaluation is included in policy. **Exhibit 1-25** provides a sample evaluation document used in another Oklahoma district.

¹⁷ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/documents/files/Prelim.%20report%20Dec.%202015%202015.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.template.net/business/strategy-templates/sample-recruitment-strategy-template/>

¹⁹ <http://www.ere-media.com/ere/6-easy-steps-to-building-a-recruiting-strategy-and-successfully-measuring-the-outcome/>

²⁰ <https://www.go2hr.ca/article-category/recruitment/planning>

**Exhibit 1-25
Sample Evaluation Tool for Non-Teaching Staff**

Performance Criteria	Appropriate Level of Performance	Room for Growth	Unsatisfactory
Attendance			
Job Knowledge			
Quality of Work			
Attitude			
Dependability			
Conduct			
Teamwork			
Neatness			
Do you recommend remediation?	Yes / No		
I agree with the above evaluation	Check		
I disagree with the above evaluation	Check		
I request a job targets report for the Needs to Improve ratings checked above.	Check		
Two week notice statement			
Signature lines			

Source: Blair Public Schools, 2013

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement an evaluation system, with input from support staff that will include the use of the approved evaluation forms already in policy, and a regular schedule for performance appraisal in order to maintain and enhance employee performance.

Supervisors should provide support employees with a deliberate and thorough evaluation process. Support staff should provide input into the development of an evaluation form and schedule. Once the schedule has been determined, the district should designate who is responsible for evaluating each support staff member. The results of the evaluation process should be used to improve and continue the high performance of support staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-19

BCPS has historically had difficulty in acquiring sufficient substitutes and instead tends to rely upon teachers on their planning periods or administrators to cover for absent teachers. This

practice negatively impacts classroom instruction overall, as teachers providing coverage have less time for their own teaching duties and principals are taken from administrative duties.

Currently, the substitutes are paid on an hourly timecard and it is up to principals' secretaries to find the substitutes. It was stated that there are only a handful of substitutes routinely available.

Exhibit 1-26 provides survey results regarding substitutes. As shown, 33 percent of staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that substitutes are available, while 63 percent *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*.

Exhibit 1-26
Staff Survey Results Regarding Substitute Availability

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district has a pool of quality substitutes to fill positions when necessary.	11%	22%	5%	41%	22%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

The effects of not having enough available and qualified substitutes are manifold:

- Teachers cover absences during their planning periods or even double up classes. This affects instruction in two classes instead of one.
- There is a reduction of time for teachers to plan together, discuss students' progress and/or curriculum improvements, and mentor new teachers.
- Classroom aides are pulled from their assignments, again affecting two classes instead of one.
- Poor instruction and, often, poor conduct, is the result of a poorly prepared substitute.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the availability of substitute teachers.

The consulting team recommends that the district take the following steps:

- visit the local colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs to promote the valuable experience that substitute teaching can provide, and ensure that prospective substitutes know that BCPS is a nearby option;
- offer certified substitutes and those in certification programs a performance evaluation. These would be completed by the teacher for whom the substitute was obtained. They would be printed on BCPS letterhead and signed, so that teachers looking for permanent positions could use them in their application packages;

- ensure that BCPS is paying slightly higher for substitutes than neighboring districts;
- implement a tiered salary schedule, offering an incremental increase in pay to substitutes after they have completed 30 and 60 days of substituting each year;
- provide for a substitute pay differential between certified and noncertified substitutes;
- consider reviewing anticipated job openings and employing the candidate for the opening as a full-time substitute teacher working in different classes as illnesses in staff occur, and until the opening actually happens;
- develop a volunteer or PTA program as a potential source and pool of trusted substitutes; and
- provide staff development training targeting special needs of the substitutes.

Many of the strategies outlined above can be implemented at minimal or no cost to the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Professional Development

While the development of a competent team of certified teachers and non-teaching staff is often considered a human resource function, the professional development of personnel is also a critical component of instructional delivery and school improvement. Professional development programs enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators to improve student learning. The base of knowledge in education is growing so rapidly in every academic discipline that educators must stay current and develop new expertise. Effective school districts provide ongoing learning opportunities for all educators. The SDE standards specify that professional development should increase competencies in core curricular areas.

The organization Learning Forward, formerly the National Staff Development Council, has established standards for quality professional learning that increase educator effectiveness and results for all students.²¹ These standards characterize quality professional learning as that which:

- occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment;
- requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning;
- integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes;
- aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards;

²¹ <http://learningforward.org>

- requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning;
- uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning; and
- applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Previous federal quality professional development guidelines specified that professional development should be ongoing, targeted to student achievement, and distributed over time. Single presentation and one-time only activities are not considered quality professional development.

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* supports the learning and development of educators in enhancing their capacity to help students succeed and includes new provisions aimed to help educators grow. Under *ESSA*, professional development programs and activities must be “evidence-based:” have demonstrated a record of success and that there is reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence to suggest the program is effective.

FINDING 1-20

The teacher evaluation model adopted by BCPS is the Teacher Leader Effectiveness (TLE) model. It is designed to provide teachers and principals with data that can lead to self-improvement. However, the district is not yet consistently documenting annual teacher evaluations.

The TLE model provides a means to improving teaching skills through professional development by utilizing an evaluation rubric that clearly profiles areas of needed improvement. The teacher is expected to assist the principal in his or her own evaluation activities and to select professional development that will enhance classroom performance with the goal of improving outcomes for students. The principal assists the teacher by removing barriers and helping the teacher acquire high quality professional development. The principal has the role of analyzing the results of TLE for the entire staff and noting trends and areas where larger groups of teachers could use training to increase effectiveness and then reporting that to professional development planners. The TLE model also includes evaluation models for non-teaching certified staff such as counselors and speech pathologists. **Exhibit 1-27** shows the evaluation rubric for teachers.

**Exhibit 1-27
Tulsa TLE Observation and Evaluation Rubric for Teachers**

Domain	Relative Weight	Dimensions
Classroom Management	30%	1. Preparation 2. Discipline 3. Building-Wide Climate Responsibility 4. Lesson Plans 5. Assessment Practices 6. Student Relations
Instructional, Effectiveness	50%	7. Literacy 8. Common Core State Standards 9. Involves All Learners 10. Explains Content 11. Explains Directions 12. Models 13. Monitors 14. Adjusts Based upon Monitoring 15. Establishes Closure 16. Student Achievement
Professional Growth and Continuous Improvement	10%	17. Uses Professional Growth as an Important Strategy 18. Exhibits Professional Behaviors and Efficiencies
Interpersonal Skills	5%	19. Effective Interactions/Communications with Stakeholders
Leadership	5%	20. Leadership Involvements

Source: Tulsa Public Schools,²² October 2012

In interviews and focus groups, teachers and principals seemed acquainted with the process and have started discussing the new Professional Learning Focus (PLF) approach that is tied to the TLE. Principals are visiting classrooms frequently and stated that they are confident that they recognize when learning is or is not happening. The new PLF approach guides the teacher in selecting areas of need that would improve their teaching skills.

Based on the available data, BCPS’ implementation practices in the area of teacher, administrator, and support staff evaluations is found to be inefficient and inconsistent. On the staff survey, a number of classroom teachers indicated they had not received an annual evaluation in the previous year. This important area of responsibility requires rapid improvement to meet state standards. Documentation and timing appear to be the problem. When evaluations are not completed in a timely manner and with proper documentation, neither staff, administration nor the BOE are legally protected should employment issues arise.

²² <http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/TLE-TPSFramework12.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION**Remove barriers to timely and documented annual evaluations of staff.**

To implement this recommendation BCPS must accomplish the following:

- Adopt an evaluation plan for principals.
- Analyze what has and has not been done regarding the TLE system.
- Determine if additional training is needed for evaluators.
- Determine if additional training is needed for teachers and/or support staff.
- Clear up any confusion regarding timing of evaluations, and remove any other barriers to the evaluation process.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-21

The BCPS professional development plan seems to be only a beginning of the year workshop effort for the teaching staff. After that, teachers are on their own if they want to attend something during the year. There does not appear to be a district effort to tie training into TLE evaluation results or into any identifiable district curriculum initiatives. The absence of a coherent, multi-year plan can result in fragmented school improvement initiatives.

The district does not have a multi-year plan or schematic that describes a professional development program for teachers, nor is there a plan that includes detailed objectives and multi-year strategies for accomplishing these. Without these, teachers may lack an understanding of the professional development focus and how initiatives connect over time. The principals have commented that they try and work with teachers on identified improvement areas and then assist with providing resources and finding opportunities where teachers can get the training needed.

RECOMMENDATION**Charge the professional development committee to develop a clearly articulated multi-year plan.**

The plan should describe the professional development program for teachers, including detailed objectives and multi-year strategies for achieving the training necessary. The committee should outline a professional development program for teachers rooted in instructional initiatives and the TLE evaluation. For non-teaching staff, appropriate training can also be based on evaluation activities.

Professional development activities should directly tie to curriculum initiatives, technology implementations, personnel evaluations, and job responsibilities. This type of planning will reduce fragmentation and increase teacher understanding of the initiatives designed to improve student achievement. This approach should also lead to greater professionalism, greater buy-in to overall school improvement, and enhanced performance of teaching and non-teaching staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

E. COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

School districts are a vital part of communities, often associated with a community's identity, sense of pride, and quality of life. This is especially true in smaller communities. In order to strengthen this role, school districts should develop effective communications and community involvement programs that lead to a more informed and engaged staff and community. Research demonstrates that community outreach benefits both the community and the schools.

Effective community involvement programs should highlight the unique characteristics of the school district and the community. These programs can substantially affect citizen perceptions of and engage the community with the school system. Effective programs will rally public support and involvement. They can result in parent and community volunteers, public participation in the decision-making processes that affect the schools (i.e., bond and board elections), and productive business and community alliances.

FINDING 1-22

Community involvement is regarded as essential in BCPS, largely due to the isolation of the population in the rural panhandle of Oklahoma. The broad list of activities in **Exhibit 1-28** that rely on BCPS community involvement highlights the utility and importance of community involvement to the district. In interviews and focus groups, community involvement was regarded as a strength for BCPS.

Exhibit 1-28
BCPS Community Involvement and Partnerships

Community Involvement and Partnerships
Carl Perkins Consortium – Career Tech
Big Five Head Start
Oklahoma Panhandle State University – Career Pathways and other partnerships
Title I Parent meetings
Booster Clubs
Parent Teacher Organization
Parent Teacher conferences
Safe School Committee
Healthy and Fit School Committee
Rotary Club
Chamber of Commerce
Local Churches

Source: Compiled by Prismatic, January 2019

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for its community involvement efforts.

FINDING 1-23

While BCPS has an active PTA/PTO at the elementary level, there has not been any recent effort to expand this as parents move through the district from elementary to the secondary schools. Historically, the district had a larger PTA/PTO representing the entire district; it faltered after leadership changed. There are many benefits associated with active parent organizations not the least of which is providing input to and community support for district initiatives. The district does not have a formal structure to support and foster organized parent involvement through such organizations as the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). As a result, the organizations are not able to accomplish their full potential for impacting schools.

While many see fundraising as the primary role of a PTO, the work of the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) shows that parents can come together with teachers, school administrators, and the community to improve student achievement.²³ Through CIPL leadership training, parents can partner with teachers and administrators to develop projects that reach far beyond fundraising. These projects focus on:

- making schools more welcoming to parents;
- easing students' transitions between schools;

²³ http://prichardcommittee.org/family_engagement/ciplfellowship/

-
- promoting literacy skills of both adults and children;
 - boosting schools' technology resources;
 - encouraging schools to examine achievement and attendance data; and
 - bringing teachers and parents together to discuss mutual hopes for their schools.

According to the National Education Association, when parents engage in ways to improve learning, students make greater gains.²⁴ Schools that build partnerships with families, “respond to parent concerns, honor their contributions, and share decision-making responsibilities, sustain connections that are aimed at improving student achievement.” The PTOs play a key role in building these partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION

Expand PTA/PTO into the secondary schools.

The district should establish a working secondary level Parent Teacher Association (PTA) unit by utilizing the leadership of the parents at the elementary school, as the elementary leadership groups and students move forward in the school system. The district could support the new PTAs through webpage development and creating regular opportunities for the PTAs to address the BOE regarding their activities. The BOE will need to establish policies for PTA fundraising. The state PTA organization can provide assistance in getting started.

As the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory points out, based on its work on family and parent involvement, school improvement efforts are more sustainable when parents and the community understand them and have been involved in the decision-making process. Apathy, distrust, and confrontation are often manifested when the community is not involved in the decisions affecting the education of their children. With diverse student populations, parent involvement presents challenges as schools strive to create welcoming environments and outreach programs that involve parents in their communities. Studies show that when parents and community members are engaged with and in schools, student performance improves, attendance increases, and dropout rates decrease.²⁵

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be accomplished with existing resources.

FINDING 1-24

The district lacks a volunteer program. Volunteers can be a great asset in assisting staff who are stretched thin. **Exhibit 1-29** reflects survey results on the use of volunteers in BCPS. While most

²⁴ <http://www.nea.org/home/52849.htm>

²⁵ <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/family29/1.html>

parents felt they are encouraged to volunteer (68 percent), the lack of sufficient actual volunteers could stem from the lack of a structured program.

Exhibit 1-29
Staff and Parent Survey Results Regarding School Volunteers

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Staff	The school district effectively uses volunteers to assist with meeting district goals.	16%	22%	49%	11%	3%
Staff	The school district has adequate number of staff to carry out its operations.	11%	51%	11%	11%	16%
Parent	My child's school encourages parents to volunteer, if they are able.	12%	56%	19%	9%	4%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

Exhibit 1-30 compares BCPS to peer districts in number of volunteer hours. BCPS is the third highest in reported hours per student when compared to peer districts, but that is relative as all have little use of volunteers. At 0.9 hours per student in a year, BCPS is getting only about one hour per school day of volunteer time.

Exhibit 1-30
Volunteer Hours per Student, 2016-17

District	District Hours per Student
Boise City	0.9
Buffalo	0.4
Sentinel	1.2
Smithville	0.2
Tipton	4.1
Turpin	0.3
Peer Average	1.0

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles January 2019

Without district guidelines and emphasis, volunteering can quickly be lost in all the other pressures that schools face. The National Parent Teacher Association's *Seven Steps to a*

*Successful Volunteer Program*²⁶ provides useful information for creating and maintaining an active school volunteer program. The steps are:

- assessing the volunteer needs each school has;
- working with and training principals, teachers, and school staff on using and supervising volunteers effectively;
- setting goals and objectives for volunteer assignments;
- recruiting volunteers;
- training and orienting volunteers;
- training and recognizing volunteers; and
- evaluating volunteer performance and program success.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a systematic volunteer program in BCPS.

The available information seems to support an expanded role for parent and community volunteers to go to work in the school. Action on enhancing the use of volunteers will not only benefit the school and staff, it will also help create a more informed and engaged community, which can lead to greater support for BOE and bond elections. Additionally, an enhanced effort to use volunteers can help create a pool of trusted substitutes and people that can be relied on for input and advice regarding the school district.

BCPS should develop a volunteer program that promotes parent and community involvement in the district, with specific goals in leveraging volunteer efforts toward improved academic outcomes. The superintendent should gather and task a committee with researching successful small school volunteer programs and then develop a BCPS volunteer program. It should include administrators, teachers, parents, and community members.

The program can include classroom, bus, and school grounds volunteers, formal development of parent/teacher organizations, and programs that are aimed at involving specific groups like grandparents. It should seek consistency in policies and practices throughout the district and should also be formally approved by the BOE.

The committee should be flexible in thinking of opportunities for parents, grandparents, and guardians to be involved outside the traditional concept of classroom volunteering and should focus on ways they can help support academic outcomes. To allay fears regarding the quality of volunteers, the program should provide training to the volunteers so that expectations are

²⁶ <http://www.pta.org/3549.htm>

understood. The parent input provided through the surveys should be used as a starting point to inform district leaders of parent priorities and concerns.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

F. COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC RELATIONS

The primary role of communications in a school district is to convey a message and image consistent with the BOE policies and implemented through procedures established by the superintendent and district staff. Critical components of communications include strategies for externally communicating with the community and internally communicating within the school district. External methods of communicating are both technology-based and personal to parents and other patrons. Internal communications involve those between staff members of the school district.

The district does utilize a number of other communications strategies for messaging to students and parents. **Exhibit 1-31** contains the various communication strategies that were found in use in BCPS.

Exhibit 1-31
Communication Strategies

Technology-Based	Written and Published	Personal Contact
Website, Teacher Sites, Facebook	Student Handbooks	School visits/Parent Conf./Face to Face
Email, Texting, Twitter	Teacher Handbooks	Attending school events
Student Info System	Posted BOE agendas	Attending booster club meetings

Source: BCPS interviews and documentation, January 2019

FINDING 1-25

Parent surveys and focus groups point to the need for improvement in communications to parents. Specifically, this refers to effective messaging to parents. It includes specific individual responses to parents, and group messaging designed to inform about events or issues daily and weekly. Lastly, it is group messaging that is designed to tell the districts story including goals, problems with reaching goals, and taking input on the direction of the district from patrons.

Exhibit 1-32 provides the survey results from parents and students regarding communications. The majority of responses suggest that most parents are satisfied with the communication from teachers, but they are not pleased with the lack of involvement in school level decision-making.

**Exhibit 1-32
Parent and Student Survey Results Regarding Communication**

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parent	I receive timely communications from my child’s teachers regarding his/her progress in school.	19%	53%	11%	16%	1%
Parent	Parents play an active role in decision-making in our school.	1%	33%	27%	32%	7%
Parent	I receive enough information from the district regarding academic expectations for my child (i.e., student testing, retention, etc.).	7%	49%	19%	20%	5%
Student	My teachers communicate regularly with my parents about my academic progress.	15%	30%	33%	18%	5%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

The consulting team compiled a list of themes voiced by parents. They suggest that parents want to play an active role in BCPS (**Exhibit 1-33**).

Exhibit 1-33
Common Themes of Parent Concerns

- The school lunch program must be improved.
- School security could be improved through installation of intercoms and controlling of entrances into buildings.
- Students lack school pride.
- There is a failure to hold students to high academic standards.
- Valuable programs have been cut. Want them back!
- When multiple parents voice the same concerns they are basically ignored.
- The quality of the teaching staff is inconsistent. Most are good but there are some place holders.
- Lack of class options hurts our high school students.
- There is a terrible language barrier with Hispanic students.
- Discipline at the high school is inconsistently applied.
- Marijuana use is a problem in high school age students.
- Students are not getting the technology exposure that they need.
- The community is apathetic about educating children.
- The community has not supported new facilities even though the old ones are in terrible shape.
- There is little understanding of school revenue and the oversight on spending and a lack of trust.
- Sports are over-emphasized.

Source: Prismatic Interviews and Focus Groups Results, January 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Develop new opportunities for parents to become engaged in school decision-making by utilizing short duration focus group activities at the school and district-level.

To implement this recommendation each school should do a self-assessment on current points of contact with parents and whether any of these are advisory activities. This analysis should review

the functioning of federal and state required committees and then decide if there are any other possible opportunities for involvement.

Each principal should convene a focus group of their parents and discuss methods of encouraging greater engagement of parents in school advisory activities. Additionally, principals should utilize focus groups to address topics of concern such as communications, school discipline, school security, development of student pride, etc. The same approach should be used at the district superintendent level, but with a different group of parents representing either community expertise or a cross section of parents with students in school from Pre-K through 12th.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-26

The district's website is not complete. As a result, it is not the communications tool with parents, students, and staff that it could be.

BCPS parents commented on the survey forms that the website needs work because there is nothing on it and calendar information is out of date. The consulting team reviewed the website and found many blank pages and links that did not lead to current information.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the district's website as an information resource for parents, students, and staff.

The webpage functions should be updated to resolve the lack of timely updates. Ideally, a stakeholder focus group should be held to ask questions about what information should be on the website. Then, a schedule of when the assigned person will update the website with the desired information should be established.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-27

BCPS has low parent conference attendance rates. This is a concern, as parent conferencing is a formal method of communicating with parents. **Exhibit 1-34** shows a five-year comparison of parent conference attendance rates for BCPS, its peers, and the state. The district had a participation rate at parent/teacher conferences that was below the state in all years except for 2012-13 and 2013-14. In 2016-17, BCPS had a conference attendance rate of 61.0 percent, which was the second lowest among its peers.

Exhibit 1-34
Trend in Parent Conference Attendance

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Boise City	89.5%	76.4%	55.0%	46.0%	61.0%
Buffalo	75.2%	57.9%	68.0%	77.0%	59.0%
Sentinel	78.6%	87.8%	88.0%	82.0%	76.0%
Smithville	64.6%	70.2%	70.0%	62.0%	71.0%
Tipton	75.4%	74.9%	79.0%	86.0%	85.0%
Turpin	91.7%	83.1%	83.0%	84.0%	68.0%
State	74.0%	74.1%	74.0%	74.0%	73.0%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Epstein (2001) at Johns Hopkins University²⁷ and others have documented research showing the positive effect that strong parental involvement has on schools and on student achievement. Their findings include:

- 50 to 85 percent of the variance in achievement scores, IQ, or verbal ability can be attributed to parent, family, and home environment variables.
- Parent education programs, especially those that train low income parents to work with their children, improve how well students use language skills, perform on tests, and behave in school.
- Many studies have found that when parents become involved in school activities, not only do their attitudes improve, but so do those of their children. Student achievement rises as well.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a strategy for increasing parent conference attendance or participation.

The strategy can include analyzing existing efforts at achieving parent conferencing, determining which new strategies have the best chance of success, and implementing at least one new strategy and analyzing the results. Strategies for increasing parent conference attendance can include the following:

- Schedule siblings back-to-back when possible.
- Offer early evening, early morning, and night conferences when necessary.
- Use prearranged phone call appointments.
- Offer drop-in babysitting during conference times.

²⁷ Epstein, J. L. (2001) *School, family and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Provide a sandwich dinner for those coming straight from work.
- Make sure the teachers have training in conferencing and provide personalized worthwhile information about the students.
- Implement student-led conferencing.²⁸

BCPS principals should analyze the efforts to achieve parent conference attendance with their teachers and determine what best fits their situation.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-28

BCPS has made some indirect efforts at communication to the public for the purposes of public relations, but work remains. BCPS has relied primarily on a message board, the website, posting activity schedules, and involvement in some community sponsored activities. More direct methods of developing good public relations would include parent meetings, community advisory groups, regular parent surveys, or community surveys.

A good public relations program sets up success in community support that becomes visible in bond voting support, parent involvement, volunteering and business support of the district. A good public relations program can illuminate for everyone the strengths of the school district. **Exhibit 1-35** profiles some of the strengths of BCPS identified by stakeholders. These strengths were gleaned from interviews and focus groups.

²⁸ <http://www.pta.org/3549.htm>

Exhibit 1-35
Strengths of BCPS Identified by Stakeholders

Strengths of Boise City Public Schools
The BOE is focused on kids in every decision.
Caring attitude of teachers.
Truly helping community raise its kids.
Whole school is working on improvement.
School is a welcoming and friendly place.
Teachers are responsive through the Email system.
School is exceptionally clean.
Elementary school is topnotch.
Sports are very supported by the community.
Janitorial staff is fantastic.
Community always comes through when we fundraise for activities.
Teachers are emotionally invested in the kids.
Teachers know the parents.
Proud of the teachers in the district who strive to educate kids not oppress them.
Community involvement.
Extracurricular activities are strong (sports, choir, academic team etc.).
Teachers desire to get better.
Special resource room is great.
Gymnasium, Wildcat pride room and auditorium are used by community groups.

Source: Prismatic Interviews and Focus Groups Results, January 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Develop methods to enhance BCPS public relations activities.

Administration can develop points of contact by attending community meetings and asking for time to talk about the schools. For example, speaking at Rotary and Chamber of Commerce meetings on behalf of the schools is an excellent approach. Public relations basically involve taking advantage of community opportunities to tell the schools story. A business partners program can be a natural outgrowth of these activities.

To implement this recommendation, BCPS should include administrators, BOE members, teachers and parent representatives on the committee. Then reach out and invite people from the BCPS community that deal with public relations to come and talk with the committee. This might be newspaper editors/manager, business managers who themselves deal with public relations, local TV, radio personnel with experience in public relations, university professors in journalism, and public relations or others. The committee can also acquire materials for review from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPR).²⁹

²⁹ <https://www.nspr.org/resourcesarticles>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 1-29

The BCPS staff has suggested through interviews, surveys and focus groups that timely and detailed internal communications are a problem, district-wide and at all levels. Successful internal communications provide the foundation for a well-functioning organization.

Successful internal communications are the responsibility of all staff including the originator of the message and the listener. Communications in most school districts involve both direct and indirect methods. The indirect methods involve technology such as an email group and individual messaging, phones, Facebook, messaging, district website, electronic events boards and paper-based/written such as schedules, publications of handbooks, letters, and memorandums. Direct methods are face-to-face discussions in meetings with groups or as individuals in offices, halls or other locations. Combinations of direct and indirect methods combined with active listening/reading usually result in the most success. All of this can be undercut by a lack of detail, timeliness, and specificity and/or arbitrary or unintentional limitations on who receives the messages. Additional problems can happen if email groups are not set up and maintained, 'need to know' lists are not developed and maintained, phone lists are not up to date, or the teacher directory is outdated. Other problems can happen when typical channels and contacts such as faculty meetings and committee meetings are not functioning.

Exhibit 1-36 reflects the survey results regarding internal communication. The results suggest that a significant number of staff either opted not to express an opinion or responded negatively to district administrative communication efforts. Among staff, there was a considerable amount that *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that the principals effectively communicate with their staff (41 percent), the superintendent and central office effectively communicate with the district staff (27 percent), and the district effectively communicate with parents and community members (38 percent). While, 94 percent of staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that email is the main communication avenue.

Exhibit 1-36
Staff Survey Results Regarding Communication

Survey Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The superintendent effectively communicates with district staff.	14%	46%	14%	19%	8%
The central office effectively communicates with district staff.	16%	38%	19%	19%	8%
The district effectively communicates with parents and community members.	8%	41%	14%	27%	11%
The principals effectively communicate with their staffs.	8%	41%	11%	19%	22%
District staff and administrators often use email to communicate with one another.	26%	68%	0%	6%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

Regarding district internal communications, comments made by staff after completing the survey plus other focus groups and interview comments are juxtaposed below in **Exhibit 1-37**.

**Exhibit 1-37
Communications Issues and Themes**

General Statements
There is a lack of communication district-wide.
Communications must be worked on.
Major improvement is needed in communications between administration and staff.
Teachers are not communicated with and not treated as professionals.
There is a need to open lines of communication so that no one is left out.
Leadership, teamwork and a sense of community is lacking.
Communications are not clear, detailed or timely.
Little details are missing in communications.
Examples
There is a language barrier with students and some staff (Hispanic speaking).
Some support staff do not have email access.
Communications to teachers and staff on compliance with dress code needs to be improved.
Administration needs to listen to teachers and support staff and then act.
Communications between school levels needs improvement.
In discipline or parent complaints incidents the teacher's side is never heard.
We all need to support one another communicate and work together.
Read your emails it is all there.
No one knows when teachers are absent without coverage until you see students sitting alone next door to you.
No one knew where focus groups were meeting and often did not know when the meeting was taking place.

Source: Prismatic Interviews and Focus Groups Results, January 2019

RECOMMENDATION**Establish district level committees of stakeholders to discuss communication issues and to develop workable solutions that can be implemented for the 2019-20 school year.**

To implement this recommendation the superintendent should chair a committee and all teaching staff should be represented. The consulting team suggests that all the following serve: principals, two teachers from each school level (elementary, junior high, and high school) and one preschool teacher, the current school counselor, and the special education teacher.

There should be four other separate sub working committees on communications that include:

- a sports and extra-curricular committee made up of teachers, administrators, and parents;
- an office support committee made up of the school secretaries and the central office secretary;
- a second support committee of custodians, maintenance, cafeteria, and bus drivers made up of the people in these areas of work; and
- a committee on parent communications strategies made up of teacher representatives, parents, and administration;

These four committees can be chaired by people selected by the superintendent.

Each committee will identify communication problems, solutions, action steps, and the person assigned to make sure action steps are implemented and a reasonable timeline for accomplishing the action steps. All five committees should meet in the summer with one goal: to make communications clear, detailed, and timely. Each committee should develop a written report detailing its recommendations. The superintendent should follow up with those responsible for action steps.

FISCAL IMPACT

This can be implemented within existing resources.

Chapter 2:
Instructional Delivery

Chapter 2

Instructional Delivery System

This chapter addresses the instructional delivery of Boise City Public Schools (BCPS) in the following sections:

- A. Curriculum
- B. Instructional Delivery and Student Performance
- C. Special Programs
- D. Student Services

The primary purpose of any school system is educating children. Effective schools deliver quality instruction based upon a district's capacity to manage and implement a rigorous, relevant curriculum. The education process requires robust policies and procedures that direct the instructional process, provide well-designed programs to meet the needs of all students, and provide resources to support program implementation. The monitoring and evaluation of program effectiveness based upon student performance data are also essential.

A. CURRICULUM

Oklahoma state education laws, as codified in the Oklahoma Administrative Code (*210 OS § 15*), manage the instructional process to ensure academic success for all students. It is the responsibility of the school district to meet the requirements of the law. A district's instructional program, along with its allocation of resources, is how a district attempts to meet the educational needs of all students. A well-designed and managed process for developing curriculum and directing instruction, collecting assessment data to evaluate and monitor programs, and providing the resources needed to support educational efforts is essential if a district is to meet the needs of its students.

Curriculum development and instructional delivery are critical components of student learning. The presentation of materials, concepts, skills, and new ideas greatly affect the acquisition of knowledge. Curriculum content and instructional strategies need proper alignment and regularly scheduled evaluations. This promotes improvement of student performance and ensures curricular relevance, rigor, and equity.

Oklahoma board of educations (BOEs) and superintendents provide principals and teachers with necessary tools to deliver the state adopted standards. The Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS) drive educational delivery. With OAS, educators are encouraged to shape their educational efforts by integrating the best practice of instructional shifts. The goal is that such efforts will provide the rigor and relevance students need to be college and career-ready.

The OAS provides a consistent, clear articulation of learning expectations, guides teacher instruction, and assists parents in knowing what they need to do to assist in the educational process. The academic standards are intended to mirror the robust, relevant, real world knowledge and skills that students need for success in college and careers. The OAS defines the content, knowledge, and skills students should gain during their K-12 educational careers. It

prepares high school graduates for success in college courses and in workforce environments. **Exhibit 2-1** further explains the OAS standards.

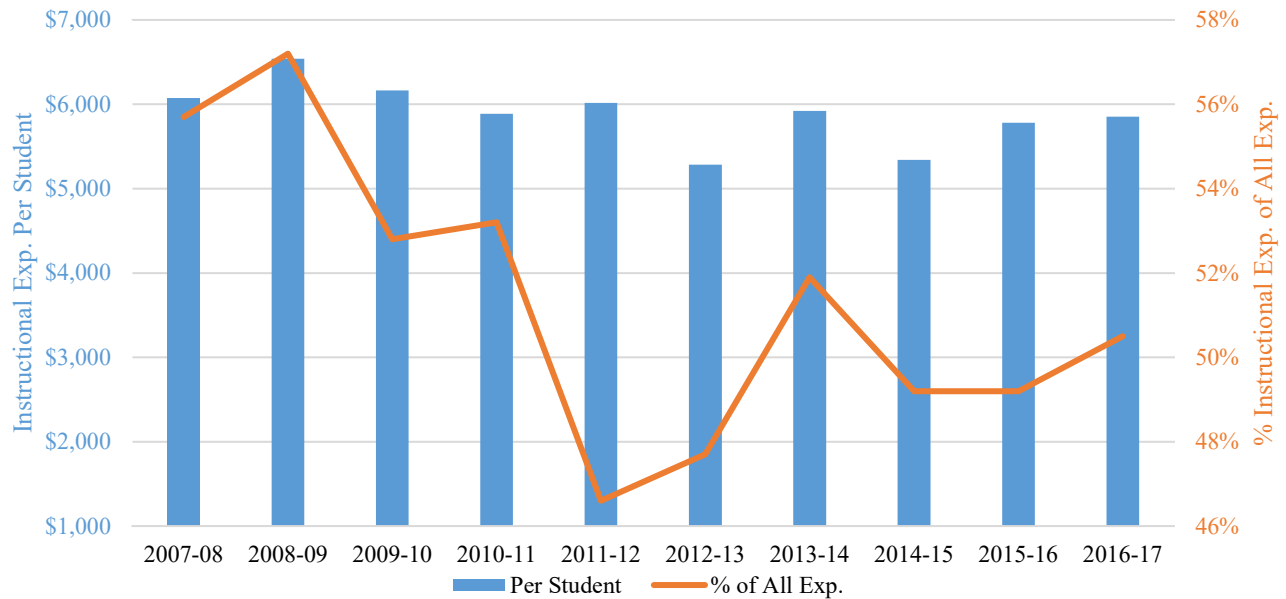
**Exhibit 2-1
Oklahoma Academic Standards**

What the OAS Does	What the OAS Does Not Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on deep thinking, conceptual understanding, and real-world problem-solving skills • Set expectations for students to be college, career, and citizenship ready • Incorporate literacy in science, social studies, and technical subjects • Emphasize the use of citations and examples from texts when creating opinions and arguments • Increase rigor and grade level expectations • Determine the full range of support for English language learners and students with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictate how teachers should teach • Mandate a specific curriculum • Limit advanced work beyond the standards • Require the purchase or development of entirely new instructional materials • Prescribe all that can or should be taught • Limit efforts to prepare students for college, career, or citizenship readiness • Prescribe interventions for students below grade level

Source: The Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE), 2018

Exhibit 2-2 provides a 10-year comparison of BCPS instructional expenditures as a percent of total expenditures as well as the annual instructional expenditures per student. Over that period, instructional expenses have ranged from 47 percent to 57 percent of all expenditures. Instructional dollars per student have varied from to \$6,539 in 2008-09 to \$5,283 in 2012-13.

Exhibit 2-2
Trend in Instructional Spending



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database and Prismatic calculations

The total number of core curriculum units offered by BCPS was tied with Smithville as the second-lowest and was lower than both the community group and state (**Exhibit 2-3**):

- The comparison shows BCPS tied with Sentinel with the lowest in the number in fine arts units and was also lower than the community group and state.
- BCPS tied with Sentinel with the highest in the number of social studies units and exceeded the community group and the state.
- BCPS tied with four peers and exceeded the community group in the number of science units but was lower than the state.
- BCPS was tied with two peers in the number of language arts units but was lower than the community group and state.
- BCPS was tied with Tipton in the number of math units but was lower than the community group and state.
- BCPS was tied with all of its peers in the number of languages units but was lower than the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-3
Comparison of Core Curriculum Units by Subject, 2016-17

Subjects	Boise City	Buffalo	Sentinel	Smithville	Tipton	Turpin	Community Group	State
Language Arts	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	6.0	5.0	4.7	5.2
Science	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.5	6.2
Math	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.4	5.7
Social Studies	7.0	4.0	7.0	5.0	4.0	6.0	5.3	6.8
Fine Arts	2.0	6.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	13.0	3.5	8.1
Languages	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.4
Total	21.0	23.0	23.0	21.0	20.0	33.0	23.1	34.4

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-1

The district has no on-going process to ensure curriculum is horizontally and vertically paced and aligned. At the elementary, there is one teacher per grade level. At the junior high and high school there is primarily one teacher for each core content area. There are no measures, processes, or procedures to address curriculum gaps and redundancies of vertically pacing and alignment. There is no grade level and content area, horizontal or vertical pacing and alignment process based on formative or summative student assessment. There are isolated efforts at aligning curriculum, yet the district has no full-scale curriculum alignment process among the grade levels and content areas. BCPS lacks intentional and targeted efforts to align all the core curriculum and implement pacing calendars that are ongoing working documents.

With no horizontal and vertical content curriculum guides and pacing calendars, neither is there an instructional plan outlining foundational student-centered outcomes for critical thinking, technology skills, goal setting and organizational skills, and communication. The consulting team heard inconsistent and negligible descriptions on how these components are woven into lesson plans, daily curriculum content, and instructional delivery. The district administrators expressed expectations to teach OAS, yet, monitoring and accountability are not uniformly maintained across the district. Some BCPS teachers engage in random dialogue about curriculum, instruction, and assessment of standards. However, no district-wide efforts to formalize teacher dialogue and discussion across all grade levels and content areas exist.

Systems for accountability and curricular adjustments based on student performance need development, implementation, and continual adjustment. Student test scores indicate there are still learning gaps. There is no steady upward spiral as students progress through content. The significant fluctuation of Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) student performance scores are indicators of the need to address the horizontal and vertical curricular and instructional gaps that are obstacles to improved student performance.

The staff survey results in **Exhibit 2-4** indicate teachers and school administrators had knowledge of curriculum alignment and pacing issues. However, no digitalized evidence or documents were presented to support the survey results.

Exhibit 2-4
Staff Survey Results Regarding Curriculum

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teachers know what is to be taught and when because they have access to a district- adopted Pacing Calendar that reflects the current Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS).	16%	41%	38%	3%	3%
The district's curriculum is aligned from grade to grade and from class to class.	11%	35%	41%	14%	0%
Teachers have scope and sequence documents that determine what is taught and when.	8%	32%	49%	11%	0%
Test data from district adopted benchmarks and mandated end-of-year tests are used to improve the district's curriculum.	8%	41%	41%	11%	0%
Teachers effectively use student data to improve instructional practices.	8%	54%	30%	8%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

In interviews and focus groups the consulting team found only sporadic dialogue referring to the curriculum pacing and alignment. No district alignment process is in place. There was no reported use of SDE resources. The consulting team found no substantial evidence to support the survey results. Student performance on OSTP do not reflect a continuous upward spiral of improved student performance.

Curriculum that is vertically mapped and aligned is a process for detailing what content and skills are required and taught at each grade level and course during a school year. Calendar pacing tells when the content is taught and revisited. The curriculum maps provide a year-long overview, rather than a daily classroom perspective, of what content and skills are required over the course of the school year (Jacobs, 1997). Curriculum mapping creates a document for teachers to follow and gives guidelines to monitor accountability and ensure the required curriculum is being followed (O'Malley, 1982).¹

¹ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/curriculum-handbook/421/chapters/Overview.aspx>

Curriculum pacing guides or calendars help teachers stay on track, pace the frequency content is taught, and ensure skills are revisited for review, reteach and/or maintenance. These pacing guides serve a similar purpose to that of traditional scope-and-sequence documents, which lay out expectations of the material to be covered in each subject at each grade level. Pacing guides are different because they detail when the skills and content that are expected to be on the annual state test are presented to students. Teachers schedule these ongoing topics before the spring testing dates. Pacing guides are tied to benchmark assessments that take place quarterly or even more frequently, further delineating what teachers must teach and when they teach it. Some pacing guides specify the number of days, class periods, or even minutes that teachers should devote to each topic.²

Research and best practice recommend the identification and specific sequencing and scaffolding of content skills and learning objectives horizontally and vertically. Also recommended is identifying learning gaps based on student performance. Teachers must know which skills and objectives have not been mastered and require remediation and re-teaching. Curriculum alignment or mapping involves a second-order change. Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) state that second-order change:

...involves dramatic departures from the expected, both in defining a given problem and in finding a solution. Curriculum Mapping may be considered a second-order change for our district because it challenges the status quo of historical practices and therein may result in resistance. However, it has the potential of resulting in transformative learning.³

Jacobs (1997) states:

To make sense of our students' experiences over time, we need two lenses: a zoom lens into this year's curriculum for a particular grade and a wide-angle lens to see the K-12 perspective. The classroom (or micro) level is dependent on the site and district level (a macro view).

Though the micro and macro levels are connected throughout a district, there is a conspicuous lack of macro-level data for decision-making. Yet we need that big picture for each student's journey through his or her years of learning. With data from curriculum mapping, a school and its feeding and receiving sites can review and revise the curriculum within a larger, much-needed context. Data on the curriculum map can be examined both horizontally through the course of any one academic year and vertically over the student's K-12 experience.⁴

The Curriculum Decisions Website examines mapping research and provides pragmatic rationale. The site addresses the importance of the horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment

² <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Pacing-Guides.aspx>

³ Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. (pp. 66). Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

⁴ Jacobs, H. H. (1997). Chapter 1: The need for calendar-based curriculum mapping. *Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum & assessment K-12*. Alexandria, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

and serves as a valuable foundational resource. It also provides descriptions of the mapping process and how the process is completed.⁵

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement processes and procedures to horizontally and vertically pace and align the K-12 core curriculum.

Electronic maps and pacing calendars at all grade levels and in core content areas should become the comprehensive “text” from which teachers deliver instruction. The district’s administrators should deliberately schedule time and help teachers develop processes, procedures, and clearly defined expectations for horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment. These decisions are based on both formative and summative student performance data. Data from all subgroups need analysis. It is the teachers’ responsibility to have a sound knowledge base of the standards and content taught. Equally important is the teachers’ obligation to translate the aligned and paced content, skills, and outcomes into their daily lesson plans.

To improve alignment of the BCPS curriculum, the superintendent, principals, and teachers should take the lead in aligning Pre-K through grade 12 core curriculum and creating pacing calendars based on student performance data. The district should allot teachers release time to begin initial dialogue and planning regarding how to horizontally pace and vertically aligned core curriculum.

Aligned curriculum maps identify the skills, content, and pacing period for all OAS skills and content. Each grade level and core content area need to be mapped and calendar paced. For each course and grade level the process indicates when skills are to be introduced, taught to mastery, and maintained or reinforced for long-term retention. The process should culminate in the creation of electronic documents that are user friendly and guide daily instruction for each course and/or grade level. The maps should also incorporate the student-centered outcomes and support Depth of Knowledge (DOK) requirements, SDE blueprints, and OAS.

Properly developed and implemented curriculum maps and pacing guides, along with the use of frequent benchmark formative assessments, free teachers of the intense, last minute, “teaching to the test” reviews. Formative assessments provide cumulative documentation of student performance; the aligned core curriculum is mapped, paced, and adjusted to meet student need and testing requirements. This gives teachers a reliable roadmap for preparing students for success.

Each year the maps and pacing calendars should be updated and shared with new teachers. All teachers must understand the content and the instructional expectations of their specific course and grade level. Placing maps on the district’s website communicates the academic and instructional expectations to the community and parents. Teachers find creating their own curriculum maps most useful and pragmatic. This creates ownership and a deeper understanding

⁵ <http://www.curriculummapping101.com/curriculum-mapping-general>

for implementation. There are many free resources available for teachers to use as a guide, such as:

- yearlong draft maps available for both language arts and math;⁶
- information regarding curriculum mapping;⁷
- information on alignment;⁸
- sets of curricular resources to help educators translate the OAS into classroom practice;⁹ and
- a collection of documents in which Oklahoma teachers shared their work to be used as sample/example curriculum guides in ELA.¹⁰

FISCAL IMPACT

The development of curriculum maps and pacing guides to improve the BCPS curriculum will take time. Professional development days, release time during school, and summer meetings could become work days. The consulting team estimates that \$5,000 should be budgeted for substitute pay (if teachers miss class time for the meetings); stipends (if teachers work outside the contract day); and materials (office supplies, binding, etc.) for each of the next two school years.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Develop curriculum maps and pacing guides to improve BCPS curriculum.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 2-2

The district adopted a new K-12 math series. The series aligns with Oklahoma Academic Skills (OAS), has digital resources, provides student hands-on activities, and outlines multiple student engagement strategies. Implemented with fidelity, the series will offer students multiple modalities for learning and retaining math skills and concepts. This provides all grade levels with math curriculum continuity, common math vocabulary, and uniform instructional presentation of math content.

Research and best practice stress the need for a K-12 coherent curriculum in mathematics. International mathematics teaching and learning expert, Marilyn Burns, explains, “Too often mathematics instruction gives students the erroneous notion that learning math is all about

⁶ <https://www.engageny.org/resource/year-long-draft-curricular-maps-in-ela-and-mathematics>

⁷ <http://www.ok.gov/sde/curriculum-mapping>

⁸ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/building-academic-vocabulary>

⁹ <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-curriculum-frameworks>

¹⁰ <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B34TUiFtH9SxSFk3c3lYmoxbnM>

learning procedures rather than making sense of ideas.”¹¹ Implementing a new math series, which includes multiple processes for helping student make sense of the mathematics, is a key step in moving away from simple teaching of procedures, to the teaching of mathematical thinking and reasoning using flexibility in strategies and approaches. Adopting the same math series enables all grade levels to learn from a uniform scope and sequence and common curriculum that supports state standards.

COMMENDATION

The district is commended for adopting a K-12 math series.

FINDING 2-3

The district lacks processes and procedures to annually evaluate instructional resources. The district does not comprehensively review curricula and supplemental resources to determine relevancy and alignment with OAS. Across the district, there are no defined efforts to routinely collect data to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of instructional resources and the impact on student achievement. The consulting team did not find evidence of an evaluation process to determine how core curriculum textbooks, software, supplemental and remedial interventions, instructional strategies, and enrichment activities are aligned with relevant student need. The district has a high population of English language learner (ELL) students. The consulting team learned library books are purchased, and some software is available for ELLs. However, there was no evidence presented to indicate these resources are aligned with the taught and tested curriculum, have direct impact on improved student learning, and support learning English through the study of content.

At the junior high and high school, teachers primarily work in isolation and select their own supplemental resources. Except for math, some textbooks were found to have outdated copyrights. Interviews and focus group conversation revealed the need for additional instructional resources to update and supplement the texts. However, no evaluation or screening process is in place to ensure new purchases support identified student need. There was no evaluation process to ensure current textbooks and supplemental resources aligned with current OAS.

Most federal and state instructional resource/programs require individual instructional resource/program evaluations. However, highly effective schools take the evaluation process to the next level and evaluate all locally implemented instructional resources/programs. This ensures instructional resources/programs work in concert and are effective for remediation or enrichment at each grade level and content area. An annual evaluation process ensures all instructional resources, programs, and software are not “busy work” but directly improve standards driven student learning. Likewise, an annual evaluation process determines if instructional resource materials are addressing identified learning gaps or redundant and

¹¹ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct14/vol72/num02/Uncovering-the-Math-Curriculum.aspx>

repetitive overlaps. All teachers need resources that are relevant, support curricula rigor, and most importantly, seamlessly align with state standards and improved student performance.

Without comprehensive instructional resource/program evaluations, schools risk getting into curricular and instructional traps. They continue doing what they have always done and serving students several instructional resources without focused intent and alignment to state standards and targeted student learning need. Systematically collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information regarding instructional resources provides district administrators and teachers with valuable assessment information.

Evaluations should measure and answer questions such as:

- Is there a need to improve, modify, or abandon the supplemental instructional resources?
- Does the resource yield the intended effect on improved student learning, including all subgroups?
- Are the resource goals still relevant to student need and aligned to state standards?
- Do the resources render unintended outcomes?
- Is there a need to change or refine the implementation strategies and procedures?
- Are all the individual resource components valuable and effective in improving student achievement?
- Does the instructional resource/program have positive impact on students, teachers, school climate, and culture?¹²

Districts can then use the evaluation to make data-driven, informed decisions. The evaluation should guide the district to keep or abandon instructional resources/programs. Based on data, modifications, additions, deletions, or revisions to instructional resources/programs can be determined. The evaluation should determine the instructional impact resources have on subgroups such as struggling readers, ELLs, special education students and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requirements.

Such information is crucial for aligning district funds with new purchases. Instructional resources/programs must support best instructional practices and directly align with the identified paced and aligned curriculum. Without implementing a regularly scheduled evaluation system, BCPS positions itself to fund instructional resources/programs that are misaligned, not meeting identified student need or the intent behind their implementation. Most of all, the Boise City community and stakeholders need assurance the district is not spending money and time on ineffective instructional resource/programs.

¹² http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014007.pdf

RECOMMENDATION**Develop and implement a plan to annually evaluate curricular and instructional resources, software, enrichment, and remediation materials to ensure alignment with OAS and student learning needs.**

High performing districts annually evaluate all instructional resource/programs, new initiatives, grants, and district processes. The combined data determines if there is need to eliminate components or discontinue the resource or instructional resource/program. The data should also provide evidence that the instructional resource/program positively:

- impacts improved student learning in all subgroups;
- contributes to the relevance and rigor of instruction and OAS curriculum;
- meets the intended curricular and instructional purpose; and
- supports best instructional practices.

In the long term, instructional resource/program evaluations focus on improving student achievement. Evaluation is a guide to build upon successes and leads to ongoing improvement in practices and outcomes.

The BCPS superintendent, principals, and all teachers should develop a list of all curricular and instructional resources they routinely implement to supplement, remediate, or enrich their instruction, and support the curriculum. The list should include a rank ordering of total dollars spent on each implemented resource. The superintendent should then direct evaluation efforts to those with the highest costs and the strongest correlation to student performance data in the bottom quartiles.

The superintendent and principals should work with teachers to identify and abandon resources and materials that are no longer robust and relevant to the knowledge base students need for the next level of study and college and career-readiness. This evaluation and abandonment process must be simple, easily implemented, and directly focused on supporting improved student performance.

All materials can undergo a formative and summative evaluation. A formative instructional resource/program evaluation can be used in purchasing new instructional resources/programs and during the implementation of the resource. Such evaluation promotes close examination of instructional resource/program implementation, as to whether there were changes, adjustments, or improvements, and that it is adapted with fidelity. **Exhibit 2-5** presents examples of formative evaluation questions to explore.

Exhibit 2-5
Formative Instructional Resource/Program Evaluation

While the instructional resource/program is ongoing, these questions should be asked several times:

- Is the instructional resource/program being implemented as it was designed?
- Do the students understand the instructional resource/program's concepts?
- What are the misconceptions about the instructional resource/program?
- Are all BCPS instructional resource/program users implementing the instructional resource/program in the same way?
- Is the instructional resource/program being implemented on schedule?
- Is there enough time to implement all aspects of the instructional resource/program?
- What aspects of the instructional resource/program do not seem to be working as well as you intended?
- Do instructional resource/program implementers need additional training on the instructional resource/program?
- Are there any negative outcomes surfacing?

Source: http://www.janetwall.net/attachments/File/9_Step_Evaluation_Model_Paper.pdf

Summative instructional resource/program evaluation takes place after the instructional resource/program is implemented and routinely used. It is conducted at the end of each school year, or another logical time, such as the end of instructional resource/programmatic intervention. **Exhibit 2-6** presents examples of summative evaluation questions to explore.

Exhibit 2-6
Summative Instructional Resource/Program Evaluation

After an instructional resource/program has been implemented ask:

- What did the instructional resource/program accomplish?
- Did the instructional resource/program reach its goals and objectives?
- What impact did the instructional resource/program have on students?
- What were the outcomes?
- Who benefited from the instructional resource/program?
- How much was the benefit to improved student achievement?
- Was the benefit greater with this instructional resource/program when compared with another instructional resource/program?
- Did all types of students benefit from the instructional resource/program?
- What were the positive outcomes?
- What were the negative outcomes?
- What should be improved/changed in the instructional resource/program?
- Does the benefit of the instructional resource/program warrant the cost?

Source: http://www.janetwall.net/attachments/File/9_Step_Evaluation_Model_Paper.pdf

In addition to asking these evaluation questions, it is also important to make certain the instructional resources/programs align tightly with the current OAS, DOK expectations, and Oklahoma's expected student performance levels. BCPS demographics such as language, poverty, mobility, ethnicity, and bottom quartile student test scores should also be taken into consideration for abandonment or retention purposes. Teachers cannot afford to implement instructional resources/programs and materials that do not have high impact on closing the achievement gap and improving student performance. There are many free resources available to gather additional information, including:

- resources on designing and planning instructional resource/program evaluation;¹³
- a basic guide to instructional resource/program evaluation;¹⁴ and

¹³ <https://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/designing-and-planning-your-program-evaluation>

¹⁴ <https://managementhelp.org/evaluation/program-evaluation-guide.htm>

- an evaluation matrix and template.¹⁵

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. Initially, BCPS staff could objectively and fairly evaluate resources with input from all administrators and teachers. However, federal guidance notes that districts should expect to spend between five and seven percent of the total funding of an instructional resource/program on evaluation. In time, it would be preferable to contract with an outside evaluation firm with credibility and expertise in statistical analysis. Using federal monies, the consulting team recommends that a minimum of \$5,000 per year be allocated to evaluation efforts.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Evaluate all instructional efforts and initiatives.	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)	(\$5,000)

FINDING 2-4

Although BCPS teachers individually document when they teach OAS, there is no district-wide process monitoring assessment, mastery, and maintenance of the standards. As a result, the district lacks uniform monitoring to ensure all standards are not only taught, but also assessed with fidelity, and the resulting student performance levels addressed.

Teachers are expected to create weekly lesson plans. There are multiple lesson planning formats across the district. No common lesson planning format is implemented to document how the curricula are paced and revisited for reteach, remediation, or maintenance. Some teachers indicated they document the date when each OAS objective is taught. There is no standardized accountability process to track or monitor the standards mastered by all students. It was unclear how all students are monitored to ensure they receive the needed remediation or reinforcement. Use of the state’s blueprints, item specifications, and released items as resources to support teaching and assessing OAS was not clearly evident.

Oklahoma school districts can use the Teacher Leader Effectiveness evaluation process (TLE) to assist in the process of holding teachers accountable for implementing OAS appropriately. However, the consulting team received little information that BCPS used TLE data to support accountability efforts. The TLE framework clearly states all learning objectives and state content standards are explicitly communicated to all students. TLE requires teachers to implement curriculum and deliver instruction in accord with OAS. The TLE framework also says the teacher “facilitates tracking of student progress using a formative approach to assessment and monitors the extent to which students understand their level of performance.”

Research is clear about the damage of an ineffective curriculum and poor instructional delivery. Students should not be assessed on concepts inappropriately paced or taught. It can take years of instruction with an effective teacher to turn that damage around. School systems need a laser-like focus on high expectations to teach the identified curriculum. Teaching children at a high level of

¹⁵ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/sst/evaluationmatters.pdf>

proficiency should be the core work of every teacher. Use of varied instructional strategies, effective assessment techniques, data utilization and integration of technology are a given for school districts and teachers who want their students to be successful. When teachers deliver highly effective instruction based on the identified curriculum, accountability measures are met automatically.¹⁶

RECOMMENDATION

Implement district-wide accountability procedures to ensure all OAS standards are taught, assessed, mastered, and paced with fidelity.

The district administration should reinforce expectations that all OAS standards are taught and monitored with accuracy and fidelity. The lesson planning process needs refining to meet accountability expectations. Currently, there are multiple lesson planning formats. Adopting a planning system and infusing accountability procedures could meet accountability expectations. If pacing calendars are put in place, they can also serve as an accountability measure for the taught, tested, and mastered curriculum. The principals should see if select teachers have a process that is working. If their test scores concur, perhaps their process could be adapted for district-wide implementation.

The accountability system enables teachers to document OAS standards taught and ensure student progress toward mastery is closely monitored. The process is a support system to ensure students are appropriately prepared for success on state assessments. Previous student performance test data need scrutiny. Standards with a strong pass rate need targeted review and teachers need to determine why students were successful. Probing curriculum pacing, frequency taught, instructional strategies, and methodologies implemented need analysis. Failed standards also need the same examination. These data provide teachers with information to adjust pacing, instructional strategies, and to increase the frequency for teaching OAS. The district should build upon existing electronic processes and examples found on multiple websites and programs.¹⁷

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing funds.

FINDING 2-5

The district is not benchmark testing consistently across all core content areas. Teachers use insufficient benchmark measures to determine student mastery or the need for remediation or re-teaching. Benchmarks are not commonly used to measure student performance against a fixed set of predetermined learning standards (i.e., OAS). Student performance in subgroups are not analyzed. Criterion-referenced formative assessments are limited and sporadic. There are no district-wide benchmarks that measure student performance against OAS. BCPS teachers lack timely, ongoing, formative data to adjust instruction for reteaching and reviewing content.

¹⁶ <https://www.advanc-ed.org/source/seven-levels-accountability-student-success>

¹⁷ <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/year-at-a-glance/>; <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct08/vol66/num02/Pacing-Guides.aspx>

Periodic benchmark testing is randomly used by several teachers. It was not clearly defined how the information is applied to determine if students are appropriately progressing on grade level and mastering the state standards. During interviews and focus groups, the consulting team found no uniform district expectations for all teachers to administer benchmark assessments to monitor student progress.

Principals are not assisting teachers using the ALCA database. **Exhibit 2-7** describes the database subscribed to by the district. The extensive data and resources available can be tailored to the specific teacher and district benchmark needs.

Exhibit 2-7
Current Subscribed ALCA Database Overview



Source: <https://www.alca.is/>

In focus groups and interviews, teachers expressed limited knowledge regarding either the data base or benchmark testing. Not all teachers clearly understood the need to translate student benchmark data into creating small group learning opportunities, flex group arrangements, and remediation strategies. BCPS uses no benchmark data to align curriculum and inform pacing and instructional design. Use of benchmark assessment results as feedback for both parents and students was not evident. Overall, no comprehensive evidence was presented to indicate there are clear directions, district-wide expectations, and consistent accountability for teachers to administer criterion referenced benchmark assessments.

Criterion-referenced benchmark assessments yield formative data, testing student knowledge and performance against a fixed set of content or a state standard. Formative benchmarks are assessments administered regularly throughout the school year. Teachers have a measure of whether their students are on grade level and grasping the material. These data help teachers decide what they need to teach, re-teach, or remediate. It also gives teachers input as to whether the written, taught, and tested curriculum are aligned. By using benchmark results, teachers learn what needs reviewing with individual students, as well as which students have attained mastery and need to be challenged. Benchmarking also helps students keep track of their grade level success and their progress to mastering standards.¹⁸

Formative benchmark assessment is a proven research-based best practice. Benchmarks directly support high-quality instruction and effective assessment. The primary purpose for teachers to incorporate benchmarks is because it improves both their teaching and individual student learning. Formative assessment is a practice that informs teachers about “how” students learn and “what” they are not learning. It focuses on the day-to-day learning interactions between the teacher and the students. Teachers routinely using periodic criterion-referenced benchmarks as a standard classroom practice have an immediate measure of what students know and how well they are learning standards and content. This enables teachers to promptly adapt instruction to meet students’ needs. Formative benchmarks guide the teacher to make instructional adjustments that keep students on the path to mastery.¹⁹

Formative assessment is a “process.” Heritage (2007) describes it as “a systematic process to continuously gather evidence about learning.”²⁰ Boston (2002) explains that it is “the diagnostic use of assessment to provide feedback to teachers and students over the course of instruction (p. 2).” Whatever method a teacher uses – oral questions, a short test or quiz, a paragraph, or any other classroom activity – formative assessment uncovers the degree to which students understand and have mastered what is being taught on a day-to-day basis. It enables customized instruction based on what students know, not on what the textbook or program says to teach next. Formative assessments inform the next days or immediate instructional path and measures student progress toward the end of unit summative test.²¹

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement district-wide processes and procedures for administering criterion-referenced benchmark assessments to monitor progress and measure mastery of OAS.

The superintendent and principals should set expectations for all teachers to administer formative criterion benchmark assessments. The district needs training and an accountability procedure to ensure benchmark tests are administered and results are used to design instruction. Staff meetings and PLC meetings should be used to discuss how benchmarking is aligned with OAS, DOK, and how the results guide teachers to change and target instruction. The principals should lead and provide time for teachers to engage in dialogue and discussions about how benchmark

¹⁸ <https://www.edglossary.org/criterion-referenced-test/>

¹⁹ www.ascd.org/publications/books/110017/chapters/Questions-and-Answers-About-Formative-Assessment.aspx

²⁰ Heritage, M. (2007). Formative assessment: What do teachers need to know and do? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 140.

²¹ Boston, C. (2002). The concept of formative assessment. *ERIC Digest*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED470206>

results also give students a clear understanding of what they do not know or what they have mastered in the current unit of study. Motivation to learn and be successful grows from knowing what learning gaps exist.

District leaders and teachers should embrace the mindset that benchmark assessments are a key part of the learning process. Criterion-referenced benchmark assessments are an ongoing check for student progress and mastery of content and standards. The assessment results guide teachers in decision-making about future instruction. The principals should use staff meetings, PLC meetings, and one-on-one conversations to articulate expectations and raise awareness of the importance of administering benchmarks.

The district could use the ALCA software and training to initiate and begin developing benchmark OAS assessments. Teachers can also create their own benchmarks using resources.²² If needed, hiring an outside consultant can help teachers initiate benchmarking. Using benchmark results to adjust curriculum, form flex groups for remediation, reteach, or enrichments is a yearlong, continual process.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources initially. If it is determined necessary, the district could contact an external firm to provide assistance.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire a firm to support teachers in the initial development of benchmarks.	(\$2,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

B. INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

High-achieving districts have curriculum maps that clearly define standards and learning objectives for each subject and grade level so that teachers know the content expectations and instructional timelines for student mastery of objectives. It takes strong instructional leadership to implement the curriculum. The principal and teachers, working collaboratively, are responsible for consistent implementation, quality instruction in the classroom, and student performance. The principal’s instructional leadership is the catalyst for effective instructional delivery and high student performance.

The College of Education at Washington University, Center for Educational Leadership, has developed a framework for instructional leadership. According to their website, the framework is not the sum total of the work of instructional leaders; rather, it is a description of the most important aspects of instructional leadership. **Exhibit 2-8** describes the five core beliefs that

²² <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/dipsticks-to-check-for-understanding-todd-finley>; <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/110017/chapters/Questions-and-Answers-About-Formative-Assessment.aspx>; <https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/formative-assessment-plc.pdf>

drive the work in school leadership at the Center and **Exhibit 2-9** describes the four dimensions of instructional leadership.

Exhibit 2-8
Core Beliefs – Center for Educational Leadership

Beliefs	
1	Instructional leadership is learning-focused, learning for both students and adults, and learning which is measured by improvement in instruction and in the quality of student learning.
2	Instructional leadership must reside with a team of leaders of which the principal serves as the “leader of leaders.”
3	A culture of public practice and reflective practice is essential for effective instructional leadership and the improvement of instructional practice.
4	Instructional leadership addresses the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and learning diversity in the school community.
5	Instructional leadership focuses upon the effective management of resources and of people – recruiting, hiring, developing, evaluating C particularly in changing environments.

Source: <http://info.k-12leadership.org/4-dimensions-of-instructional-leadership>

Exhibit 2-9
Dimensions of Instructional Leadership

Dimensions	
Vision, Mission, and Culture Building	School leaders, committed to collective leadership, create a reflective, equity-driven, achievement-based culture of learning focused upon academic success for every student.
Improvement of Instructional Practice	Based upon a shared vision of effective teaching and learning, school leaders establish a focus on learning; nurture a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and public practice; and monitor, evaluate, and develop teacher performance to improve instruction.
Allocation of Resources	School leaders allocate resources strategically so that instructional practice and student learning continue to improve.
Management of People and Processes	School leaders engage in strategic personnel management and develop working environments in which teachers have full access to supports that help improve instruction.

Source: <http://info.k-12leadership.org/4-dimensions-of-instructional-leadership>

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), from the Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), synthesized the body of research on the effects of leadership practices on student achievement. In their research, McREL identified 21 leadership responsibilities and 66 practices that are substantially associated with student achievement. These characteristics and

responsibilities are now integrated into a Balanced Leadership Framework.²³ Much of the TLE evaluation process adopted for Oklahoma administrators uses this research.²⁴

School administrators must have pragmatic knowledge, skills, strategies, and tools to positively affect student achievement. They must move their instructional leadership skill set past abstract and theoretical thinking to concrete, day-to-day practices to be effective leaders. Instructional leaders understand the need for multi-faceted strategies that enable them to know when, how, and why leadership action must be taken.

Superintendents and principals form the core of educational leadership in school districts. The school leader is no longer simply that of a building manager who makes sure that schedules are met, the school is maintained, and that discipline is properly enforced. Today, the educational leader is responsible for consistency of implementation of an aligned curriculum, the quality of instruction in the classroom, and student performance. Recent research contends that school leaders influence classroom teaching, and consequently student learning, by staffing schools with highly effective teachers and supporting those teachers with effective teaching and learning environments.²⁵

Effective learning environments begin with strong educational and instructional leadership and include:

- Instructional Vision – instructional practices that are guided by a common, research-based instructional vision that articulates what students do to learn the subject effectively.
- Continuous Improvement of Instruction – resources (i.e., professional development, allocation of teacher time, budget decisions), policies, and procedures (i.e., school improvement plans, teacher evaluation) aligned toward continuous improvement of instructional practice guided by the instructional vision.
- High Expectations – for all students, academically, behaviorally, and in all aspects of student well-being.
- School Culture – a safe, collaborative, and supportive space that places high priority on ensuring that students are successful in school and life.

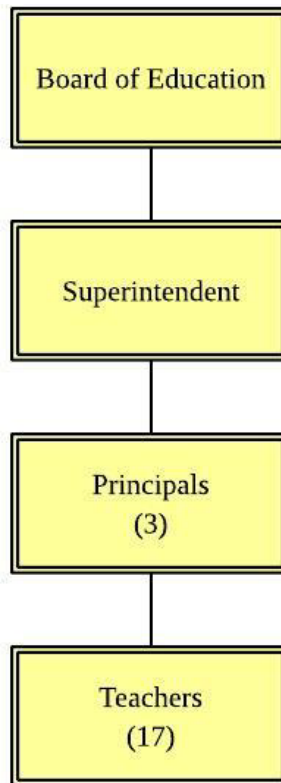
Exhibit 2-10 provides the current organizational structure for instructional delivery at BCPS.

²³ <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=balanced+leadership+framework&id=ED544245>

²⁴ <https://sde.ok.gov/tle-qualitative-components>

²⁵ https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Kappan_leadership.pdf

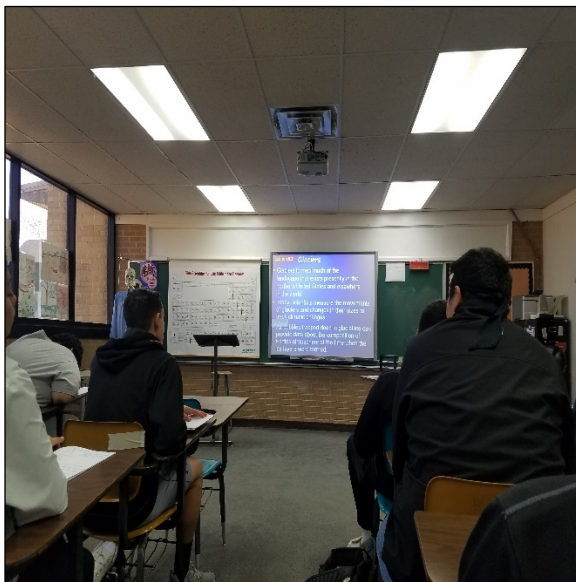
Exhibit 2-10
BCPS Instructional Delivery Organizational Structure



Created by Prismatic, January 2019

Exhibit 2-11 provides illustrations of BCPS classrooms.

**Exhibit 2-11
BCPS Classrooms**



Source: Prismatic, December 2018

Oklahoma School Testing Program

Student assessment is an integral part of measuring student performance. The Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) continues implementation of the current standards-based tests that students must take during the school year. The Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests (OCCT) consist of Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs) designed to measure student attainment of skills established for core subjects. The OCCT helps monitor student and school performance relative to the OAS. The OSTP program uses a phase-in process to increase tested grades and subjects.

CRTs have previously been administered in 3rd through 8th grade. Exams were administered for selected grades and courses in this manner:

- third grade: Reading and Mathematics;
- fourth grade: Reading and Mathematics;
- fifth grade: Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Writing;
- sixth grade: Reading and Mathematics;
- seventh grade: Reading, Mathematics, and Geography; and
- eighth grade: Reading, Mathematics, Science, US History, and Writing.

Beginning with the 2018 testing cycle, students enrolled in eleventh grade were given the Oklahoma College and Career Ready Assessment (CCRA), which consisted of two parts. For part one, each district administers either the ACT or SAT, including the writing section. Part two consists of Science Content Assessment which is aligned to the OAS for Science, and U.S. History Assessment which is aligned to the OAS for U.S. History. Historically, Oklahoma districts have administered either the ACT or SAT in eleventh grade, as well as tested tenth grade students in science and history.

Currently, state assessments are administered for selected grades and courses in this manner:

- third grade: English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- fourth grade: English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- fifth grade: English Language Arts (including a written response), Mathematics, and Science;
- sixth grade: English Language Arts and Mathematics;
- seventh grade English Language Arts, Mathematics;
- eighth grade: English Language Arts (including a written response), Mathematics, and Science; and
- eleventh grade: CCRA.

All students in the tested grades and subjects participate in the OSTP. The test results are for all students who attend a Full Academic Year (FAY). Current administrative rules define FAY as any student who has enrolled within the first 20 instructional days of the school year.

The SDE uses performance level descriptors (PLDs) advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic in reporting student test scores. Also, test scores are reported in one of the following four categories:

-
- Advanced – Student demonstrates superior performance on challenging subject matter;
 - Proficient (called Satisfactory prior to 2009) – Student demonstrates mastery of appropriate grade level subject matter and is ready for the next grade, course, or level of education, as applicable;
 - Basic – Student demonstrates partial mastery of the essential knowledge and skills appropriate to his or her grade level, course, or level of education, as applicable; and
 - Below Basic – Student does not perform at least at the limited knowledge level.

To assist teachers and districts in teaching the OAS and preparing students for the OSTP, the SDE provides a variety of resources on its website. These resources include the following:

- the OAS by subject and grade level;
- test blueprints for each grade level and subject area test that show what percentage of the test each skill will represent;
- test/item specifications highlight important points about the items' emphasis, stimulus attributes, format, content limits, distracter domain, and sample test items;
- released test questions;
- writing samples;
- curriculum frameworks in ELA, Mathematics, and Science; and
- DOK levels and percentage weights for all OSTP test questions in test specifications.

The OAS along with the blueprints, PLDs, item specifications, DOK, writing samples, and released items define the testing requirements for 2014 through 2017.²⁶

Exhibit 2-12 provides the results of the math OCCTs in 2016-17. BCPS students were lower than its peer districts in the 3rd, 4th, and 8th grades. BCPS students scored in the middle of its peers in the 5th and 7th grades and scored higher than its peers in the 6th grade. BCPS scored lower than the community group and the state in the 3rd and 4th grades. BCPS scored higher than the community group but lower than the state in the 7th and 8th grades. BCPS scored lower than the state but tied with the community group in the 5th grade. BCPS scored higher than both the community group and state in the 6th grade.

²⁶ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/assessment-administrator-resources-administrators>

Exhibit 2-12
Percentage of BCPS and Peer District
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Math
2016-17

Entity	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
Boise City	25%	17%	30%	71%	37%	20%
Buffalo	67%	18%	20%	36%	17%	29%
Sentinel	61%	52%	13%	19%	47%	21%
Smithville	42%	47%	27%	35%	36%	NA
Tipton	38%	25%	19%	22%	18%	NA
Turpin	68%	75%	63%	55%	39%	25%
Community Group	47%	39%	30%	36%	35%	19%
State	54%	49%	42%	42%	42%	29%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-13 provides the results of the reading OCCTs in 2016-17. BCPS students were generally in the middle of its peers at each grade level. BCPS scored higher than all peers, community group, and state in the 6th grade. BCPS scored higher than the community group but lower than the state in the 5th and 7th grades.

Exhibit 2-13
Percentage of BCPS and Peer District
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Reading
2016-17

Entity	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade
Boise City	38%	33%	40%	86%	36%	33%
Buffalo	33%	9%	40%	29%	25%	48%
Sentinel	33%	39%	47%	25%	53%	36%
Smithville	32%	59%	27%	41%	27%	33%
Tipton	38%	13%	25%	44%	36%	21%
Turpin	59%	50%	59%	68%	39%	38%
Community Group	42%	38%	39%	42%	35%	37%
State	49%	46%	49%	48%	42%	43%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-14 shows the 2016-17 science scores. In 5th grade, BCPS students scored in the middle of its peer districts, tied with the community group, but was lower than the state. In 8th grade, BCPS students scored the second highest among all comparison entities.

Exhibit 2-14
Percentage of BCPS and Peer District
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above in Science
2016-17

Entity	5 th Grade	8 th Grade
Boise City	40%	60%
Buffalo	40%	67%
Sentinel	60%	50%
Smithville	27%	11%
Tipton	25%	14%
Turpin	74%	56%
Community Group	40%	42%
State	51%	50%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-15 shows math scores over a five-year period. From 2012-13 to 2016-17, BCPS scores within a grade level generally declined in math except for the 6th and 7th graders. Among the class cohorts, scores also tended to decline, with the exception of the cohort that was in the 6th grade in 2012-13. The 2016-17 percentages reflect Oklahoma’s higher performance standards adopted in 2017.

Exhibit 2-15
Five-year Data Trend in Math

Grade	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Boise City	State	Boise City	State	Boise City	State	Boise City	State	Boise City	State
3 rd	27%	75%	86%	75%	70%	71%	77%	75%	25%	54%
4 th	75%	78%	91%	74%	100%	79%	91%	77%	17%	49%
5 th	44%	75%	71%	75%	91%	77%	100%	79%	30%	42%
6 th	62%	77%	53%	76%	81%	76%	50%	76%	71%	42%
7 th	27%	74%	64%	74%	29%	76%	81%	76%	37%	42%
8 th	50%	72%	9%	63%	79%	64%	36%	64%	20%	29%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-16 shows reading scores over a five-year period. From 2012-13 to 2016-17, all scores with a grade level generally declined in reading except for the 6th graders. Among the class cohorts, scores were level or improved over time for the cohorts in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grades in 2012-13. The 2016-17 percentages reflect Oklahoma’s higher performance standards adopted in 2017.

Exhibit 2-16
Five-year Data Trend in Reading

Grade	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	Boise City	State	Boise City	State	Boise City	State	Boise City	State	Boise City	State
3 rd	40%	78%	100%	80%	90%	81%	85%	82%	38%	49%
4 th	69%	74%	64%	76%	100%	80%	91%	78%	33%	46%
5 th	56%	75%	71%	76%	82%	77%	100%	82%	40%	49%
6 th	85%	72%	41%	75%	75%	74%	77%	74%	86%	48%
7 th	67%	77%	100%	81%	71%	82%	82%	82%	36%	42%
8 th	75%	82%	85%	82%	100%	86%	59%	86%	33%	43%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-17 displays results for the 2016-17 tenth grade test scores. In history, BCPS had the second highest score among its peer districts. In English and math, BCPS had the lowest score among the peer districts. In science, BCPS was the third highest among the peers. BCPS scored lower than the community group and state in all subjects except for science.

Exhibit 2-17
Percentage BCPS and Peer District Grade 10 Regular Education,
Full Academic Year Students Scoring Proficient or Above
2016-17

Entity	English	U.S. History	Science	Math
Boise City	17%	40%	27%	17%
Buffalo	46%	38%	NA	23%
Sentinel	31%	23%	25%	23%
Smithville	33%	71%	20%	36%
Tipton	50%	62%	37%	35%
Turpin	56%	21%	31%	19%
Community Group	36%	46%	24%	26%
State	44%	58%	24%	32%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-18 shows that in three of the past five years BCPS' number of high school graduates completing Regents' College-Bound Curriculum was 86 percent or better. Since 2015-16, BCPS' rate has been higher than the rates for the community group and state.

Exhibit 2-18
Trend in Percentage of BCPS and Peer District Graduates Completing
Regents' College-Bound Curriculum

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Boise City	100%	31%	6%	86%	86%
Buffalo	100%	100%	57%	100%	100%
Sentinel	100%	100%	71%	100%	93%
Smithville	46%	59%	65%	44%	63%
Tipton	100%	100%	100%	72%	83%
Turpin	97%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Community Group	85%	84%	81%	82%	81%
State	85%	84%	81%	81%	80%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-19 compares the trends in the district's ACT composite scores over time. BCPS' composite score averaged 19.7 in 2012-13 and decreased to 16.9 in 2016-17. This decline was the worst of the peers, as well as worse than the community group and state trends.

Exhibit 2-19
Trend in ACT Composite Scores

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percentage Change
Boise City	19.7	18.6	20.5	18.8	16.9	(14.2%) ▼
Buffalo	18.5	18.7	18.4	19.7	23.9	29.2% ▲
Sentinel	20.3	20.5	19.5	19.3	19.4	(4.4%) ▼
Smithville	18.6	19.7	19.0	18.3	19.7	5.9% ▲
Tipton	18.1	17.6	20.8	21.9	17.2	(5.0%) ▼
Turpin	18.8	17.5	17.9	18.4	17.9	(4.8%) ▼
Community Group	19.1	19.1	19.3	19.0	18.1	(5.2%) ▼
State	20.9	20.8	20.7	20.6	19.5	(6.7%) ▼

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

In 2016-17, BCPS was tied with three peers for the four-year dropout rate and senior graduation rate (0.0 percent and 100.0 percent, respectively). BCPS' four-year dropout rate was lower than both the community group and state. BCPS' senior graduation rate was higher than both the community group and state (**Exhibit 2-20**).

Exhibit 2-20
BCPS and Peer District Four-Year Dropout and Senior Graduation Rates
2016-17

Entity	Four-Year Dropout Rate	Senior Graduation Rate
Boise City	0.0%	100.0%
Buffalo	6.7%	93.3%
Sentinel	0.0%	100.0%
Smithville	0.0%	100.0%
Tipton	0.0%	100.0%
Turpin	23.3%	95.8%
Community Group	5.4%	98.0%
State	9.2%	96.8%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-6

BCPS teachers are not sufficiently protecting instructional time using proven strategies to engage and motivate learners. Administrators and teachers are challenged with students of poverty, language barriers, cultural differences, and lack of vision for an educated future.

Interviews and focus groups indicated apathy and disengagement were chronic classroom concerns. Classrooms were also observed where instruction did not begin promptly, students were still in the hallways after the bell, students were disengaged, on their phones while the teacher was lecturing, and students lined up at the door waiting for the bell to ring. However, it was also observed there are some BCPS teachers whose classrooms exemplify highly engaged learners and students actively involved in hands-on learning opportunities.

In general, BCPS classrooms are more traditional “teacher-centered learning” environments. The teacher is center of the learning experience and take the “active” role of teaching and the students assume a more passive or receptive role.

In student-centered learning environments, differentiated instruction, innovative practices, student engagement strategies are a part of daily routine. The interests of the students are integrated into learning tasks and the teacher gives students choice and voice. Learning activities and experiences focus on “how” all students learn and they take a more “active” role in the education experience. Administrators and teachers in high-performing, high-poverty (HP/HP) schools know that success requires more than just high-quality teaching and learning.²⁷ In HP/HP schools, the entire school district and each teacher work together to develop a common instructional framework that provides a vision of what successful classrooms look like. They know that when a school, particularly one characterized by high poverty and low or plateaued performance, lacks an instructional plan or framework, progress will be anything but systematic, and more than likely patterns of low performance and apathy will continue.

²⁷ <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/high-poverty-schools-promote-student-success-william-parrett-kathleen-budge>

Through the collaborative efforts of the leaders and staff, HP/HP schools focus on three kinds of learning: student, professional, and system. These learning agendas influence each other, and leaders in HP/HP schools make the most of this connection to facilitate sustainable improvements in teaching and learning. Professional learning is the adult learning that takes place within a school, while system learning conveys how the school as a whole learns to be more effective. In other words, as people within the school learn, the system learns.²⁸

Differentiation is a teaching method that requires teachers to know their students' abilities so they can provide student driven activities with interactive experiences and hands-on tasks that improve learning. Differentiation gives students multiple options for learning information (Tomlinson, 1999).²⁹ Differentiating instruction means observing and understanding the differences and similarities among students and using this information to plan instruction. A differentiation technique is tiering assignments. This requires teachers to adjust class experiences to meet different levels of readiness so students can complete meaningful tasks and advance forward (Wormeli, 2005).³⁰ For example, students might write a paragraph in response to their reading while others create performance and art projects to show what they have learned. Tiering also means that students read different books for instruction because each student reads and learns at his or her own instructional reading level. **Exhibit 2-21** is a resource for key principles that form the foundation of differentiating instruction.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el199909_tomlinson.pdf

³⁰ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr06/vol63/num07/Differentiating-for-Tweens.aspx>

Exhibit 2-21 Key Principles for Differentiating Instruction

- **Ongoing, formative assessment:** teachers continually assess to identify students' strengths and areas of need so they can meet students where they are and help them move forward.
- **Recognition of diverse learners:** the students have diverse levels of expertise and experience with reading, writing, thinking, problem solving, and speaking. Ongoing assessments enable teachers to develop differentiated lessons that better meet students' needs.
- **Group Work:** students collaborate in pairs and small groups and membership changes as needed. Learning in groups enables students to engage in meaningful discussions and to observe and learn from one another.
- **Problem Solving:** the focus in classrooms that differentiate instruction is on issues, concepts, and content rather than "the book" or the chapter. This encourages all students to explore big ideas, expand their understanding of key concepts, and apply content.
- **Choice:** teachers offer students choice in their reading and writing experiences and in the tasks and projects they complete. By negotiating with students, teachers can create motivating assignments that meet students' diverse needs and varied interests.

Source: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/what-differentiated-instruction/>

Differentiation engages learners by adjusting instruction to better meet individual needs. Teachers can differentiate content, classroom procedures and process, products, or the overall learning environment. The following links give additional examples of differentiated instruction.³¹

Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.³² If students are engaged with the lesson being taught, they learn more and retain more. Students who are engaged in the work tend to persist more and find joy in completing the work. Examples of innovative teaching practices that engage students include:

- inquiry-based learning;

³¹ <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-differentiated-instruction>
https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2013/12/24/ctq_powell_strengths.html
<https://www.educationcorner.com/developing-a-student-centered-classroom.html>
https://www.learningsciences.com/media/catalog/product//2/0/20ise_lookinside.pdf

³² <https://www.edglossary.org/student-engagement/>

- QR (Quick Response) codes that lead students to information by scanning the code on a student’s digital device;
- problem-based learning;
- wisely managed classroom technology; and
- jigsaw is a technique that arranges students into groups. Each group is assigned with a different piece of information to learn and then teach to the other groups.³³

These innovative teaching strategies encourage students to use their imagination to dig deep when engaging with the content of the lesson. The students are actively involved with the learning and can work with their peers in collaborative groups to showcase their learning.

RECOMMENDATION

Increase student achievement using differentiated instruction, innovative practices, and classroom engagement strategies.

Student engagement is essential for learning. If students are not actively engaged, they cannot learn and retain the content. Learning must be active, and students must be involved. All BCPS teachers can evolve to more student-centered classrooms with the help and support of the board of education (BOE) and the instructional leadership of the superintendent and principals.

The Boise City BOE should set expectations that the superintendent and principals be strong instructional leaders. They should set clear expectations that “together” the district’s goal is for learning-student, professional, and system. The expectations should include active student engagement in their learning experiences and ultimately improved student achievement – 21st Century classrooms are no longer a teacher lecture followed by chapter reading and worksheet assignments.

The district’s classrooms should continue to evolve and transition to a higher level of student-centered learning environments. Classrooms should be characterized by small interactive groups, providing multiple modes for learning, and supportive digital media. Hands-on activities and interactive resources should be a valued component in the teaching and learning cycle.

This recommendation needs to be interfaced with the district’s long-range professional development plan and facilitated through Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The district needs to provide training, support, and guidance as teachers continue to navigate toward student-centered classrooms.

³³ <https://www.amle.org/BrowsebyTopic/WhatsNew/WNDet/TabId/270/ArtMID/888/ArticleID/876/Innovative-Teaching-Strategies-that-Improve-Student-Engagement.aspx>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing professional development resources.

FINDING 2-7

BCPS lacks a clearly defined, district-wide operational model to continuously support improving language proficiency, identify educational learning needs, and structure classroom instruction to ELLs. The district has no tiered intervention measures for struggling ELLs.

The district is part of a consortium that contracts with EduSkills. The consortium primarily provides administrative service for screening, assessing, and tracking students entering and exiting the program. When students enroll, students are given a language survey. If a student is new and has not been tested, the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) screener is administered within the first week of school. The WIDA test is then given the second semester. Based on information from the language survey and assessment, students are identified for Title III. The consortium supports in tracking the student's language proficiency. Students exit the program if they meet the required WIDA score set by the SDE. The district provides new ELLs with orientations that includes taking building tours, receiving their schedules, meeting their teacher(s), and assigning them desks and lockers. Focus group discussion indicated that most often orientation is done in English.

If a student is struggling with English, based on of their test scores, BCPS teachers are responsible for providing the needed language support in the mainstreamed classroom. Recently, during and after school tutoring has been implemented that support ELLs. Beyond that, BCPS teachers engage in few high impact instructional strategies that intentionally target the learning needs of ELLs. Mainstreamed ELLs are often paired with a bilingual student. Teachers exhibited limited expertise in implementing instructional tactics that engage ELLs in comprehending content. BCPS has no common process for helping teachers plan language objectives for content areas, teach the content, and adjust assessments based on language proficiency. Teachers expressed the need for training and support with effective instructional strategies that deliver content and support in language acquisition.

Research is clear that it can take five to seven years or longer for students to acquire a level of academic English proficiency equivalent to that of their peers. Federal and state regulations require ELL students to maintain adequate yearly progress towards academic standards. Recent educational research and best instructional practices reveal common do's and don'ts teachers can implement when teaching ELLs. **Exhibit 2-22** details simple do's and don'ts benefitting all classrooms and grade levels.

**Exhibit 2-22
Do’s and Don’ts for Teaching ELLs**

Area	Do’s	Don’ts
Modeling	Model for students what they are expected to do or produce, especially for new skills or activities, by explaining and demonstrating the learning actions, sharing your thinking processes aloud, and showing good teacher and student work samples. Modeling promotes learning and motivation, as well as increasing student self-confidence – they will have a stronger belief that they can accomplish the learning task if they follow steps that were demonstrated.	Tell students what to do and expect them to do it.
Rate of Speech and Wait Time	Speak slowly and clearly provide students with enough time to formulate their responses, whether in speaking or in writing. Remember, they are thinking and producing in two or more languages. After asking a question, wait for a few seconds before calling on someone to respond. This “wait time” provides all students with an opportunity to think and process and gives especially ELLs a needed period to formulate a response.	Speak too fast, and if a student tells you they didn’t understand what you said, never, ever repeat the same thing in a louder voice.
Use of Non-Linguistic Cues	Use visuals, sketches, gestures, intonation, and other non-verbal cues to make both language and content more accessible to students. Teaching with visual representations of concepts can be hugely helpful to ELLs.	Stand in front of the class and lecture or rely on a textbook as your only visual aid.
Giving Instructions	Give verbal and written instructions – this practice can help all learners, especially ELLs. In addition, it is far easier for a teacher to point to the board in response to the inevitable repeated question, “What are we supposed to do?”	Act surprised if students are lost when you haven’t clearly written and explained step-by-step directions.
Check for Understanding	Regularly check that students are understanding the lesson. After an explanation or lesson, a teacher could say, “Please put thumbs up, thumbs down, or sideways to let me know if this is clear, and it’s perfectly fine if you don’t understand or are unsure – I just need to know.” This last phrase is essential if you want students to respond honestly. Teachers can also have students quickly answer on a Post-it note that they place on their desks. The teacher can then quickly circulate to check responses. When teachers regularly check for understanding in the classroom, students become increasingly aware of monitoring their own understanding, which serves as a model of good study skills. It also helps ensure that students are learning, thinking, understanding, comprehending, and processing at high levels.	Simply ask, “Are there any questions?” This is not an effective way to gauge what all your students are thinking. Waiting until the end of class to see what people write in their learning log is not going to provide timely feedback. Also, don’t assume that students are understanding because they are smiling and nodding their heads – sometimes they’re just being polite.
Encourage Development of Home Language	Encourage students to continue building their literacy skills in their home language, also known as L1. Research has found that learning to read in the home language promotes reading achievement in the second language as “transfer” occurs. This transfer may include phonological awareness, comprehension skills, and background knowledge. While the research on transfer of L1 skills to L2 cannot be denied, it doesn’t mean that we should not encourage the use of English in class and outside of the classroom.	“Ban” students from using their native language in the classroom. Forbidding students to use their primary languages does not promote a positive learning environment where students feel safe to take risks and make mistakes. This practice can be harmful to the relationships between teachers and students, especially if teachers act more like language police than language coaches.

Source: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/esl-ell-tips-ferlazzo-sypnieski>

There are many free resources available to gather information on simple and self-directed strategies that teachers can use, including:

- 12 ways to support ELL students in the classroom;³⁴
- five of the best instruction strategies for ELL students;³⁵
- Specifically Designed Academic Instruction for English (SDAIE), general, instructional, and environmental teaching strategies for ELLs;³⁶
- four target strategies for ELL students;³⁷ and
- practical strategies teachers can use to help their ELL students.³⁸

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a structured model or provide instructional delivery training to better serve ELLs.

The superintendent, principals, teachers, and instructional aids should engage in ongoing and relevant dialogue and discussion regarding the language needs of Hispanic students. Staff meetings or PLC meetings are the best venue for keeping teachers informed, sharing instructional practices that work, and identifying ways to meet the relevant learning needs of students. Book studies can be implemented that help teachers better serve students. Two easy to read book studies that offer strategies and techniques for teaching content in mainstreamed classrooms include:

- *Teaching English Language Learners Across the Content Areas* by Haynes and Zacrian, 2010; and
- *The ESL/ELL Teachers' Survival Guide: Ready-to-Use Strategies, Tools, and Activities for Teaching English Language Learners of All Levels* by Ferlazzo and Sypniewski, 2012.

Exhibit 2-23 explains six foundational strategies that all teachers can use.

³⁴ <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/supporting-esl-students-mainstream-classroom/>

³⁵ <https://www.fluentu.com/blog/educator-english/instruction-strategies-for-ell-students/>

³⁶ <https://www.supportrealteachers.org/strategies-for-english-language-learners.html>

³⁷ <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/teaching-english-language-learners-strategies-work/>

³⁸ <https://in01001403.schoolwires.net/cms/lib02/IN01001403/Centricity/Domain/166/IDOE-Helping%20ELL%20Understand%20Content%20Area%20Texts.pdf>

Exhibit 2-23
Six Strategies for Teaching ELLs Across the Content Areas

- **Determine content and language objectives for each lesson:** Teachers need to learn how to write a content objective for every lesson in language that ELLs can understand. At the end of the lesson, students should be asked if the objective was met. Classroom teachers also need to set language objectives for the ELLs for each lesson. A language objective specifically outlines the language that ELLs will need in order to meet the content objective. For example, if your content objective is for ELLs to provide examples of solids, liquids, and gas, the language objective could be to write simple sentences about the stages of matter.
- **Connect content to ELLs background knowledge:** Teachers need to consider the schema that ELLs bring to the classroom and to link instruction to the students' personal, cultural, and world experiences. They also need to identify what their students do not know. They must understand how the cultures of their ELLs impact learning in the classroom.
- **Provide comprehensible input for ELLs:** Language is not "soaked up." The learner must understand the message that is conveyed. Comprehensible input is a hypothesis first proposed by Krashen (1981). He purports that ELLs acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level. When ELLs are assigned to a general education classroom and spend most of their day in this environment, it is especially critical for them to receive comprehensible input from their content area teachers and classmates.
- **Make lessons auditory, visual, and kinesthetic:** Use visual representations to introduce new concepts and vocabulary. Find graphs, maps, photographs, drawings, and charts. Create story maps and graphic organizers to teach ELLs how to organize information. ELLs will benefit from hands-on activities. Have them learn by doing. Investigate project-based learning and Makerspaces.
- **Use cooperative learning strategies:** Lecture-style teaching excludes ELLs from the learning in a classroom. We don't want to relegate them to the fringes of the classroom, doing a separate lesson with a classroom aide or ESL teacher. Working in small groups is especially beneficial to ELLs who have an authentic reason to use academic vocabulary and real reasons to discuss key concepts. ELLs benefit from cooperative learning structures. Give students a job in a group and monitor that they are participating.
- **Modify vocabulary instruction for ELLs:** ELLs do not usually learn new vocabulary indirectly. It needs to be explicitly taught for them to understand texts that they're reading. ELLs need many more exposures to new words than native-English speakers. They need to learn cognates, prefixes, suffixes, and root words to enhance their ability to make sense of new vocabulary. Understanding context clues such as embedded definitions, pictures, and charts builds ELLs schema. They should actively engage in holistic activities to practice new vocabulary because learning words out of context is difficult for them. Don't overwhelm students with too many new words. Pick vocabulary that is absolutely essential in each unit. Introduce the vocabulary in a familiar and meaningful context and then again in a content-specific setting. For example, in a unit on tornadoes, the word "front" needs to be reviewed in a familiar context and then taught in the context of the unit.

Source: <http://blog.tesol.org/six-strategies-for-teaching-ELLs-across-the-content-areas/>

Much of the expertise needed to teach ELLs is also effective in teaching all students. The research on student engagement reveals many teaching tips that are applicable to all students. **Exhibit 2-24** lists tips apply to all students not just ELLs.

Exhibit 2-24 **Teaching Tips to Enhance Student Engagement**

- **Hold a meaningful conversation:** When students are not engaged, stop the lesson and ask why. Talk about what might interest them more, and let them know you are willing to try the activities they suggest.
- **Turn on some music:** Sometimes playing soft background music can help motivate them. However, take care to note the impact of background music on every student; for some students, any noise merely creates a distraction.
- **Make learning content personal:** Personalizing the learning by showing how content is meaningful and relevant to students will help them remain focused on the content.
- **Use technology:** Student today use technology in almost every aspect of their lives, and integrating this into learning will help hold the attention of many students.
- **Give students some choices:** By making different choices among lesson assignments available to students, we are sharing control of the class with them. Students will often focus on the content more when they have chosen one of several activity options.
- **Create collaborative learning that fosters relationships:** Students will often engage more in collaborative working situations than in individual situation.
- **Create challenging activities:** Student will often engage more when working on activities that challenge their knowledge, particularly in team or learning-pair types of activities.
- **Use movement to make learning active:** High-energy activities always seem to increase retention compared to more passive types of learning activities, so teachers should create learning environments that build energy.
- **Make it a game:** Games and competitive activities foster higher student engagement more readily than simple practice-the-learning activities.
- **Focus on clearly stated goals:** Teachers should identify specific essential questions or lesson objectives and stress the importance of them for the students.
- **Use an activating task:** A brief high-interest activity at the beginning of a lesson will help students focus actively on the content. Competitive activities or interesting brief video clips can add interest to the content.
- **Limit the lecture:** Teachers have long recognized that lectures make students passive learners, and as a rule, the only lectures used in classroom today should be brief highly focused mini-lessons (eight to fifteen minutes, as suggested by research on brain functioning).
- **Use graphic and illustrations:** Graphic organizers or simple student drawings that highlight aspects of the content can greatly aid in remembering that content.
- **Focus on high-order thinking:** Questions that focus on the bigger picture or the more complete task will often engage students more than simple factual or memory questions.
- **Summarize the work at the end:** Summarization is a great closure activity for the end of a lesson, and having students discuss the summary in partners for the last five minutes of class will increase memory for the content.

Source: https://www.learningsciences.com/media/catalog/product/2/0/20ise_lookinside.pdf

Another resource for the district to review is a formalized program of instruction. Schools like BCPS often use Content Based Instruction (CBI). CBI can easily interface with their current mainstreaming structure. CBI is based on the following assumptions about language learning:

- people learn a language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as an end in itself;

- CBI reflects learners’ needs for learning a second language; and
- content provides a coherent framework that can be used to link and develop all the language skills.

BCPS administrators, teachers, and instructional aides can use professional development days, PLCs, or staff meetings to share knowledge and best practices for engaging ELLs. They can review the CBI model as a resource to support the process for delivering effective instruction to ELLs.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented using staff development or Title III monies. Through discussion at PLC meetings, staff meetings, and job-embedded staff development days, teachers can learn pragmatic ways to implement these recommendations. If needed, a consultant can be employed for short term training at approximately \$1,000.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire a consultant to assist teachers with best practice instructional delivery for ELLs.	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 2-8

The district does not provide regularly scheduled release time for all teachers to participate in PLC meetings to address curricular and instructional concerns. Across the district, there is random and informal dialogue taking place. No comprehensive approach is in place allowing principals and teachers to address curricular and instructional issues. Teachers have no district-wide process or procedure to collaborate and engage in dialogue and discussion regarding curriculum and instruction.

It was learned many of the teachers see the need for a common district vision, mission, and student-centered outcomes. However, no process exists where the district establishes core priorities, and daily curricular and instructional practices. Interviews and focus group discussions reported minimal dialogue centering on the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on student-centered learning. Teachers recognize there is expertise, innovative strategies, and valuable resources among the staff, but no consistent structured time or process to share their work and expertise.

The consulting team found there are no staff meetings occurring that consistently focus on effective instruction and collaborative efforts. No staff meetings are routinely held giving voice to teachers for sharing successful interventions and daily remediation practices across grade levels and subject areas. The need exists for discussions and dialogue to consistently focus on data analysis, using formative and summative data to design, adjust, and pace curricula and instruction.

BCPS teachers are functioning at varied instructional proficiency levels. However, there was consensus among the focus groups and interviews of the need for a PLC process that allows for collaborative dialogue and pragmatic ways for addressing the instructional needs of the student population. Other reoccurring issues expressed were implementing the PLC process in a way that creates value, generates teacher buy-in, accountability, monitoring, and ensuring that quality work is done during collaborative times.

Research is clear that PLC teacher collaboration has profound implications for schools. As a school improves and moves forward, every educator must engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of three crucial questions that drive the work of those within a PLC:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?³⁹

Generally, the literature on collaboration and PLCs identifies five organizational competencies:

- supportive and shared leadership;
- collective creativity;
- shared values and vision;
- supportive conditions; and
- shared personal practice.⁴⁰

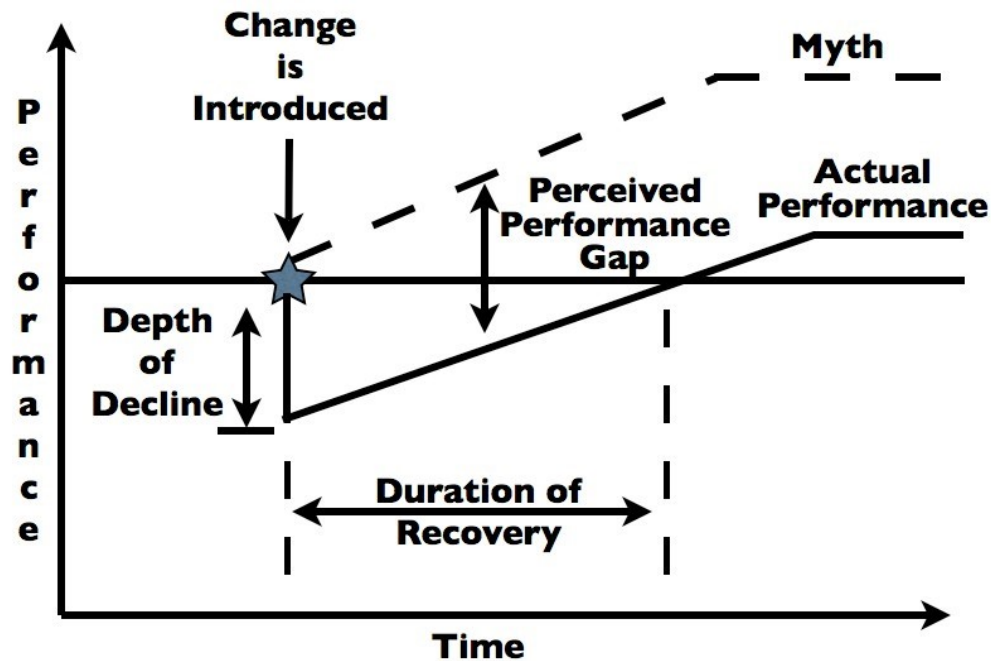
Establishing PLCs does not occur quickly or spontaneously. It requires dedicated and intentional effort on the part of the principals as instructional leaders and the teaching staff. Moving to collaborative planning and learning creates organizational change. It takes teachers from teaching in isolation and moves them to corporate thinking and shared expertise. It takes seasoned teachers out of their isolated comfort zone and into shared learning.

Exhibit 2-25 articulates change insights from Fullan's *The Six Secrets of Change* (2008). The implementation dip is expected as change is introduced. However, after recovery, actual performance is better than before the change.

³⁹ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/What-Is-a-Professional-Learning-Community%C2%A2.aspx>

⁴⁰ <http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>

Exhibit 2-25
Change Implementation



Source: <http://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2008SixSecretsofChangeKeynoteA4.pdf>

A district seeking to improve must be mindful that capacity building is more important than accountability because the former is the route to the latter. Clearly, one needs both. Finding the right combination and integration of the two is the trick.⁴¹ Being the change agent in successful schools means that growing and learning are ongoing phenomena.⁴² Exhibit 2-26 summarizes Fullan's insights regarding change.

⁴¹ Fullan, M. (2008). *The six secrets of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

⁴² <http://www.secl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>

Exhibit 2-26
Insights on Change for Continuous Improvement

Change Insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation dip is normal • Behaviors change before beliefs • The size and prettiness of the planning document is inversely related to the quantity of action and student learning (Reeves, 2002) • Shared vision or ownership is more of an outcome of a quality process than it is a precondition • Feelings are more influential than thoughts (Kotter, 2008)
Change Savvy Leadership	<p>Change savvy leadership involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careful entry into the new setting • Listening to and learning from those who have been there longer • Engaging in fact finding and joint problem solving • Carefully (rather than rashly) diagnosing the situation • Forthrightly addressing people’s concerns • Being enthusiastic, genuine, and sincere about the change circumstances • Obtaining buy-in for what needs fixing • Developing a credible plan for making that fix

Source: <http://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2008SixSecretsofChangeKeynoteA4.pdf>

*Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*⁴³ provides a road map to narrow the “knowing-doing gap” regarding PLC. This book outlines the importance of common vocabulary and common understandings of PLC concepts and characteristics. It provides the rationale for implementing PLC that benefit students. DuFour, et al., lays out purposeful steps to guide leaders in assessing perceptual reality in their school. It is a helpful guide to foundational information and the improved capacity for staff to function as a PLC.

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993)⁴⁴ suggested that when teachers had opportunities for collaborative inquiry and the learning related to it, they were able to develop and share a body of wisdom gleaned from their experience. Darling-Hammond (1996)⁴⁵ cited shared decision-making as a factor in curriculum reform and the transformation of teaching roles in some schools. In such schools, structured time is provided for teachers to work together in planning instruction, observing each other’s classrooms, and sharing feedback. These and other attributes characterize PLC.

⁴³ DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., Many, T., & Mattos, M. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

⁴⁴ McLaughlin, M. W. & Talbert, J. E. (1993). *Contexts that matter for teaching and learning*. Stanford, CA: Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching, Stanford University.

⁴⁵ Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). The quiet revolution: Rethinking teacher development. *Educational Leadership*, 53(6), 4-10.

For teachers to build the kind of trust needed to not only talk candidly but also to observe one another teach is a major first step. This takes instructional leadership and teacher empowerment. Expecting teachers to have conversations is an instructional practice that takes instructional leadership. With the evolving trends and patterns of increased rigor for instruction, collaboration between and among teachers and district leadership is vital. Teaching OAS with fidelity can take place more effectively with formalized PLC opportunities for discussion and collaborative planning. Without supportive time structures, teachers continue to work in isolation. Successful implementation of continuous school improvement requires cross-curricular and cross-grade level dialogue. Continuous improvement evolves successfully through PLC collaboration, corporate thinking, and shared decision-making. Implementation of new initiatives, such as the student-centered outcomes, along with the day-to-day decisions in schools, is more robust and maximized when districts provide teachers with PLC opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a formalized, research-based, district-wide PLC process with regularly scheduled release time, standardized norms, and support structures for teachers to collaborate and focus on continuous school improvement.

BCPS administrative staff should understand the need for finding the balance between capacity building and accountability for effective instruction. There is also need for freedom and self-direction that lead to district changes and improvement. Teachers need support, direction, and parameters that develop expertise and grow the practice of professional dialogue with fellow teachers. As teachers move past blaming the parent or socioeconomic status for deficiencies, they take ownership for reaching the child through effective instruction and student-centered classrooms. Teachers must evolve to talking about and developing curriculum together based on the state standards and skills students must learn. Teachers should no longer be tethered to textbook curriculum. They have a wealth of expertise and options for professional learning next door and across the hall and need time for collaboration as they engage in standards-based, student-centered classrooms.

The superintendent and principals should review the existing structures, schedules, and levels of teacher expertise in implementing collaborative PLC processes. With select staff, they need to reflect on instructional trends and patterns that profile the district over the last two to three years. They should assess where teachers are functioning during the implementation of PLC. The district needs to develop a profile of their journey to develop, deepen, and sustain the collaborative process. The review process needs input from all instructional staff in implementing and sustaining the PLC process. The National College for School Leadership has developed a rubric that BCPS principals should use to assess their PLC. A copy is available in **Appendix E**.

The BOE, superintendent, principals, and select teachers should determine the initial process for PLC implementation. Then, together with teaching staff, they should transition to a “systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice

in order to improve our individual and collective results.”⁴⁶ **Exhibit 2-27** is a resource for exploring scheduling options for teacher collaboration.

Exhibit 2-27 **Examples for Providing Collaboration Time**

- **Common Prep Time:** Build a master schedule to provide daily common prep time for teachers of the same course or department.
- **Parallel Scheduling:** Schedule common prep time by assigning elective and special teachers to provide lessons to students across an entire grade level at the same time each day.
- **Adjust Start and End Times:** Gain collaborative time by starting the workday early or extending the workday one day each week to gain time.
- **Shared Classes:** Combine students across two different grade levels or courses into one class for instruction.
- **Group Activities, Events, and Testing:** Teams of teachers and non-teaching staff coordinate activities that require supervision of students rather than instructional expertise.
- **Banking Time:** Over a period of days, extend the instructional minutes beyond the school day.
- **In-Service and Faculty Meeting Time:** Schedule extended time for teams to work together on staff development days and during faculty meeting times.

Source: Dufour, R. (2006). Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

FISCAL IMPACT

Initially, if an outsourced vendor is needed to provide training to instructional staff in PLC, the consulting team estimates \$5,000 for one year.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire a firm to help with PLC training, if needed.	(\$5,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 2-9

The district has no uniform process for analyzing OCCT and OSTP student performance data. The district needs a process to assist teachers in breaking down the data and applying it to

⁴⁶ Eaker, R., DuFour, R., & DuFour, R. (2002). *Getting started: Reculturing schools to become professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

instructional pacing and adjusting curriculum and instruction. There is no process to show teachers how to use student performance data to vertically align and pace curriculum and adjust plans for remediation, re-teaching, and maintenance of specific learning objectives. No uniform evidence was presented telling how teachers use SDE resources to find trends and patterns in student learning. Teachers may independently review the data but have limited knowledge and expectations for using those reviews to plan instruction and remediation.

There are no district-wide procedures to assist teachers in using OCCT data to inform targeted instruction and form flex groups for targeted remedial instruction. No standardized methodologies are in place for disaggregation of data and identifying vertical learning gaps. Data are not routinely collected at the end of each grading period and used to plan re-teach, remediation, or maintaining mastery. District-wide use of student performance data to identify and close vertical skill gaps or reoccurring curricula redundancies is minimal. Across the district, student performance data are not commonly used to plan, adjust, pace, and design instruction and adjust curriculum throughout the school year.

One of the longest-standing bodies of research is the “effective schools” research. One of the original correlates of effective schools’ research is the “frequent monitoring of student progress.” As stated, one of the correlates of effective schools:

The effective school frequently measures academic student progress through a variety of assessment procedures. The monitoring of student learning will emphasize more authentic assessments of curriculum mastery. Assessment results are used to improve individual student performance and also improve instructional delivery. Assessment results will show that alignment must exist between the intended, taught, and tested curriculum.⁴⁷

More recently, effective schools research was conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). NAESP published best practices for schools and reported how the use of student achievement data must be included in instructional decision-making. In a white paper, NAESP provided five recommendations to help principals put student achievement data to the best possible use:

- make data part of the ongoing cycle of instructional improvement;
- teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals;
- establish a clear vision for school-wide data use;
- provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school; and
- develop and maintain a district-wide data system.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ http://www.ycschools.us/downloads/ycs_hs/sevencorrelates_20151104_223914_1.pdf

⁴⁸ http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Student%20Achievement_blue.pdf

RECOMMENDATION**Implement a district-wide process for analyzing student performance data throughout the school year and use the analysis results to adjust curriculum and instruction.**

The purpose of teachers analyzing classroom data is to determine what the students have learned, what they need help to learn, and how teachers plan instruction to ensure that they all do learn. The study of student performance data are essential to identify skill gaps in student learning. The learning and skill gaps must be addressed through re-teaching or remediation. The use of data also guides improvements in the rigor, pacing, and vertical articulation of curriculum and instruction. As teachers monitor performance data, patterns of teaching and individual student learning successes and challenges become evident. It is essential for teachers to have ongoing formative data to measure learning at the end of each instructional segment. This allows teachers to make informed, collaborative decisions to address potential problems.

Working with the teachers, the principals should develop a timeline that details which student assessment data are required throughout the school year. Using this timeline, the superintendent and principals should ensure staff meetings and PLC meetings take place for analyzing student data. Meetings should focus on determining the strengths and weaknesses of the students and how the results impact the district in pacing instruction. Reviewing formative benchmark test data throughout the school year allows timely feedback on student performance, the effectiveness of teaching strategies, and any needed adjustments and alignment to the curricula.

A helpful resource for administrators and teachers to use is found in an article published in Educational Leadership, “*Developing Data Mentors*.” The authors say that “gathering student-assessment data is not enough. Administrators and teachers must learn to analyze the data and apply this information in the classroom.”

The district process should examine classroom data and ask key questions such as:

- Which content standards is the teacher assessing?
- What percent of students demonstrated proficiency?
- What implications does that have for instruction?
- Which students have not demonstrated that they can master content standards?
- What diagnostic information did an examination of student work provide?
- Based on individual student performance, what do teachers need to do next to move the student to proficiency?
- Based on the class performance, what re-teaching needs to be done?
- After re-assessing, did students demonstrate proficiency?

-
- Is re-teaching or other interventions resulting in improved student performance?
 - When comparing performance by subgroups, are any groups not performing as well as the whole group? If so, what's being done about that?
 - Are there students who are not attaining proficiency across standards?
 - What diagnostic information do we have about them to inform instruction?
 - What interventions have we tried? What interventions do we plan to try next?⁴⁹

The principals, and teachers should consider regularly graphing student data. A visual depiction of the information often yields additional insights. Another way for teachers to get a quick visual picture of who needs additional support is to color code the data recorded in the grading process. For example, if three categories are used to define student performance in the grade book (i.e., basic - B, proficient - P, and advanced - A) each could be assigned a different color. This would allow teachers to quickly determine who was progressing and who needed additional support.⁵⁰

As an example, one school district in Texas uses data boards in each school to provide an instant visual of how students are progressing. **Exhibit 2-28** provides an example data board. The top half of the board is for reading benchmark data; the bottom half, math. Progressing from left to right are categorizations from well below grade level to below grade level, to at grade level, to above grade level (red to purple to blue to green). Orange slips of paper represent individual third grade students. Green is used for fourth grade, and yellow is used for fifth grade. The student data are reanalyzed and reposted every six weeks, as new benchmark assessments are completed.

⁴⁹ Nichols, B. W. & Singer K. P. (2000). Developing data mentors. *Educational Leadership*, 57(5).

⁵⁰ <http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/progress/using.html>

Exhibit 2-28
Example of Data Board



Source: Prismatic file photo, January 2019

Exhibit 2-29 provides another example from the same Texas school district, but organized to show just one grade level. Each slip of paper represents a student; the color of the slip is determined by the classroom teacher. Students are organized by level of mastery, top to bottom. This makes it easy to see that the teacher of orange students has more students below grade level than other teachers and may be in need of some assistance before the next benchmark assessment.

Exhibit 2-29
Example of Data Board at Grade Level



Source: Prismatic file photo, January 2019

Parents as well as students need consistent and clear communication regarding ongoing student performance data. Through use of one-on-one conversation or electronic communication, they can monitor daily assignments, homework, and student test data.

Additionally, the SDE has developed the Oklahoma Family Guides for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for Pre-K through 2nd grade.⁵¹ The SDE Family Guides are resources aligned with the OAS and developed specifically for Oklahoma families to complement classroom learning. They illustrate what is expected of students at each grade level in different content areas along with activities families can do at home to further support children’s learning experiences. As Family Guides are developed for 3rd grade and up, these can continue to be a valuable resource to share with parents.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. However, an external consultant may be used to train staff in data analysis process. A short-term consulting engagement would cost approximately \$3,000.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire a consultant to help design a process for analyzing student performance data, if needed.	(\$3,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

⁵¹ <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-family-guides>

FINDING 2-10

The complex learning needs of BCPS students require principals to be strong instructional leaders. BCPS student population is diverse. The district's student population has evolved from generational farming and ranching families to students experiencing poverty, language barriers, and mobility. There are diverse cultural differences where few previously existed. Interviews and focus groups confirmed the need for skilled instructional leadership on the part of the principals.

BCPS principals are at differing stages of developing instructional leadership capacity. Interview and focus group dialogue indicated there some initial efforts where the principal works with teachers and set higher expectations for improved instruction. It was reported other teaching staff receive little or no instructional support and direction. Interviews indicated a lack of foundational knowledge, understanding, and overall awareness of the principal's role as an instructional leader.

School administrators of today must understand they have multiple roles. Principals of 21st Century schools are no longer effective if they view their primary role as managing schedules, making sure buses run on schedule, the lunchroom is orderly, classrooms are quiet, and they are in their office available if needed. These tasks still exist and must be addressed. However, all schools, including BCPS, students are changing and now expectations for effective principals are different. Classrooms are no longer just about lecture and fill in the blank chapter tests. This leads to apathy, lack of motivation, poor attitudes, and low morale. In order to motivate and improve student learning, classrooms must be about involvement, interactive learning, applied learning, projects, and creativity. For classrooms to evolve, principals must be skilled as instructional leaders.

The national and state requirements to hold schools accountable for all students learning and mastering curriculum standards and objectives has launched principals into the teaching and learning process.⁵² Today, all schools need principals who are instructional leaders who ensure there is quality instruction taking place in every classroom. Thus, there is a need for principals to spend time in classrooms, recognize which teachers implement high impact instruction, and closely monitor the process of teaching and learning. This is done while also balancing other needs such as student safety and parent relationships. Fulfilling these multiple responsibilities well requires effective principals to possess an inner compass that consistently points them toward the learning needs of students while never losing sight of their schools' visions, missions, and goals.

There is no evidence of schools turning around, improving, or meeting the needs of today's diverse learners without the influence of strong leadership. Operative instructional leadership sets the direction and influences teachers to work together toward meeting district goals and diverse learning needs of students. Principals accomplish this responsibility by providing individual support, challenging teachers to examine their own practices, implementing models of best practice, and supporting teachers in the intentional school improvement processes. Additionally, effective principals develop and depend on leadership contributions from a variety

⁵² <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/108003/chapters/Instructional-Leadership@-Supporting-Best-Practice.aspx>

of stakeholders, including teachers and parents. Key to instructional leadership is principals sharing their leadership with teachers to promote reflection and collaborative investigation to improve teaching and learning. Subsequently, principals and teacher leaders lead change from the classroom by asking questions related to school improvement, and they feel empowered to help find the answer.

RECOMMENDATION

Build the instructional leadership capacity of administrators.

The BOE, superintendent, and principals should continue to embrace the role of instructional leadership and bring that leadership capacity to a higher level. The TLE process has introduced principals to instructional leadership. Growing and building skills and capacity as a leader has a steep learning curve. This takes time, training, and job-embedded practice. The role of instructional leader must begin with personal buy-in, ownership, and the deep understanding that the role of principal is changing. Principals should personally commit to the role of an instructional leader. It is a journey of growth and developing leadership capacity and skills.

Today's principals concentrate on building a vision for their schools, sharing leadership with teachers, and influencing their staff to operate as learning communities. Instructional leaders must drive instructional improvement efforts by gathering and assessing data to determine learning needs, monitoring daily instruction to determine if the identified needs are addressed and that student-centered classrooms exist. Research related to instructional leadership and methods principals use to build and exhibit capacity and harness their leadership role centers around five key concepts:

- building and sustaining a school vision;
- sharing leadership;
- leading a learning community;
- using data to make instructional decisions; and
- monitoring curriculum and instruction.⁵³

The following links are helpful in developing basic insight into instructional leaders skills.

- Four Instructional Leadership Skills Principals Need; and
- What's an Instructional Leader?⁵⁴

⁵³ <http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/Qualities-of-Effective-Principals.aspx>

⁵⁴ <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/leaders-link/four-instructional-leadership-skills-principals-need/>

Exhibit 2-30 outlines basic characteristics of effective instructional leaders. These characteristics of highly-effective administrators can be used as another measure in BCPS' quest for continuous improvement.

Exhibit 2-30
Characteristics of Highly Effective Administrators

School Climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Culture – Establishes a safe, collaborative, and supportive culture ensuring all students are successfully prepared to meet the requirements for tomorrow's careers and life endeavors. • Communication – Proactively communicates the vision and goals of the school or district, the plans for the future, and the successes and challenges to all stakeholders. • Advocacy – Advocates for education, the district and school, teachers, parents, and students that engenders school support and involvement.
Collaborative Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Leadership – Fosters shared leadership that optimizes of individual expertise, strengths, and talents, and cultivates professional growth. • Priority Management – Organizes time and delegates responsibilities to balance administrative/managerial, education, and community leadership priorities. • Transparency – Seeks input from stakeholders and takes all perspectives into consideration when making decisions. • Leadership Renewal – Strives to continuously improve leadership skills through, professional development, self-reflection, and utilization of input from others. • Accountability – High standards for professional, legal, ethical, and fiscal accountability are established for self and others.
Educational/Instructional Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation – Seeks implements innovative and effective solutions that comply with general and special education law. • Instructional Vision – Ensures that instructional practices are guided by a common, research-based instructional vision that articulates what students do to effectively learn the subject. • High Expectations – Sets high expectations for all students academically, behaviorally, and in all aspects of student wellbeing. • Continuous Improvement of Instruction – Aligns resources (i.e., professional development, allocation of teacher time, budget decisions), policies, and procedures (i.e., school improvement plans, teacher evaluation) toward continuous improvement of instructional practice guided by the instructional vision. • Evaluation – Uses teacher/administrator evaluation and other formative feedback mechanisms to continuously improve teacher/administrator effectiveness. • Recruitment and Retention – Recruits and maintains a high quality staff.

Source: <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/federal-programs/ed-effectiveness/files/professional-principals/Self-Assessment.pdf>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School districts offer educational services to students through a variety of programs, including regular education programs and special programs. Special programs are designed to provide quality services for student populations such as those in special education and Gifted and Talented education programs.

Special Education

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B* is the federal law that supports special education and related service programming for children and youth with disabilities, ages three through 21. The major purposes of *IDEA* are:

- to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate, public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living;
- to ensure that the rights of children and youth with disabilities and their parents are protected; and
- to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

Oklahoma statutes require that each school district provide special education and related services for all children with disabilities who reside in that district in accordance with *IDEA*. This duty may be satisfied by:

- directly providing special education for such children;
- joining in a cooperative program with another district or districts to provide special education for such children;
- joining in a written agreement with a private or public institution, licensed residential child care and treatment facility, or day treatment facility within such district to provide special education for children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, children who are blind or partially blind, or other eligible children with disabilities; or
- transferring eligible children and youth with disabilities to other school districts pursuant to the provisions of the *Education Open Transfer Act*.

Districts must develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child receiving special education services under *IDEA*. The IEP must include input from the parent and regular education teachers and be aligned with education plans for children in regular education classrooms. *IDEA* requires districts to provide educational services in the “least restrictive

environment” and to include students with disabilities in state and district assessment programs. Instructional arrangements for students may include:

- all instruction and related services in a regular classroom in a mainstreamed setting;
- a resource room where the student is removed from the regular classroom less than 50 percent of the day;
- a self-contained classroom where the student is removed from the regular classroom more than 50 percent of the day; or
- a separate “self-contained” classroom for those whose disability is so severe that a satisfactory education cannot take place for any part of the day in a regular classroom.

Under *IDEA*, a school district can only place a student in a more restrictive setting such as a day treatment program or residential treatment placement if the student’s needs and educational program cannot be satisfactorily provided in the regular classroom with supplementary aids and services.

The reauthorization of *IDEA* in 2004, which went into effect in 2005, includes provisions substantially changing the way learning-disabled students are identified. One change in the law addresses early intervention services and creating opportunities to determine a student’s Response to Intervention (RtI). This approach was adopted in 2010 by the SDE. With RtI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes; monitor student progress; provide evidence-based interventions; and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student’s responsiveness. Based upon the results of these interventions, the district may need a referral for additional testing to determine if there is a specific learning disability.

IDEA now allows a school district to use up to 15 percent of its *IDEA* allocation to support services to students who have not been identified as needing special education services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment. Funds may be used for professional development in scientific research-based interventions, literacy instruction, and the use of adaptive or instructional technology. It also permits use of funds for educational and behavioral assessments.

An effective special education program is defined by *IDEA* as having the following elements:

- pre-referral or tiered intervention in regular education;
- referral to special education for evaluation;
- comprehensive nondiscriminatory evaluation;
- initial placement through an IEP meeting;
- provision of educational services and supports according to a written IEP;

- annual program review;
- three-year re-evaluation; and
- dismissal from the special education program.

Exhibit 2-31 shows comparison data on the percentage of special education students and the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in special education for 2016-17. BCPS had a special education student-to-teacher ratio that was the highest of all comparison entities.

**Exhibit 2-31
Students and Teachers in Special Education Programs, 2016-17**

Entity	ADM	Special Education Percentage of All Students	Special Education Teachers FTEs	# of Special Education Students per FTE
Boise City	264	18.2%	1.0	48.0
Buffalo	292	11.5%	1.0	33.6
Sentinel	322	17.8%	2.0	28.7
Smithville	283	14.6%	2.0	20.7
Tipton	276	20.8%	1.3	44.2
Turpin	433	9.7%	2.0	21.0
Community Group	343	20.3%	1.7	41.0
State	1,267	15.8%	8.2	24.4

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 2-32 compares district special education revenues expenditures for 2016-17. At 46.1 percent, BCPS had the lowest special education revenue-expenditure ratio among its peers.

**Exhibit 2-32
Comparison of Special Education Revenues and Expenditures, 2016-17**

Entity	Total Revenues for Special Education	Total Expenditures for Special Education	Revenues as Percent of Expenditures
Boise City	\$110,430	\$239,670	46.1%
Buffalo	\$147,039	\$185,483	79.3%
Sentinel	\$85,341	\$102,231	83.5%
Smithville	\$238,350	\$157,462	151.4%
Tipton	\$251,231	\$133,492	188.2%
Turpin	\$88,064	\$71,109	123.8%
Peer Average	\$162,005	\$129,955	124.7%

Source: OCAS Impact Aid Letters and Prismatic Calculations 2018

Exhibit 2-33 show the trend in special education revenues and expenditures over time. BCPS' special education expenditures exceeded special education revenues every year. BCPS had the highest special education revenue-expenditure ratio in 2015-16.

Exhibit 2-33
Trend in BCPS Special Education Revenues and Expenditures

Year	Total Revenues for Special Education	Total Expenditures for Special Education	Revenues as Percent of Expenditures
2012-13	\$88,689	\$215,345	41.2%
2013-14	\$112,852	\$227,184	49.7%
2014-15	\$101,907	\$213,363	47.8%
2015-16	\$111,912	\$213,686	52.4%
2016-17	\$110,430	\$239,670	46.1%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

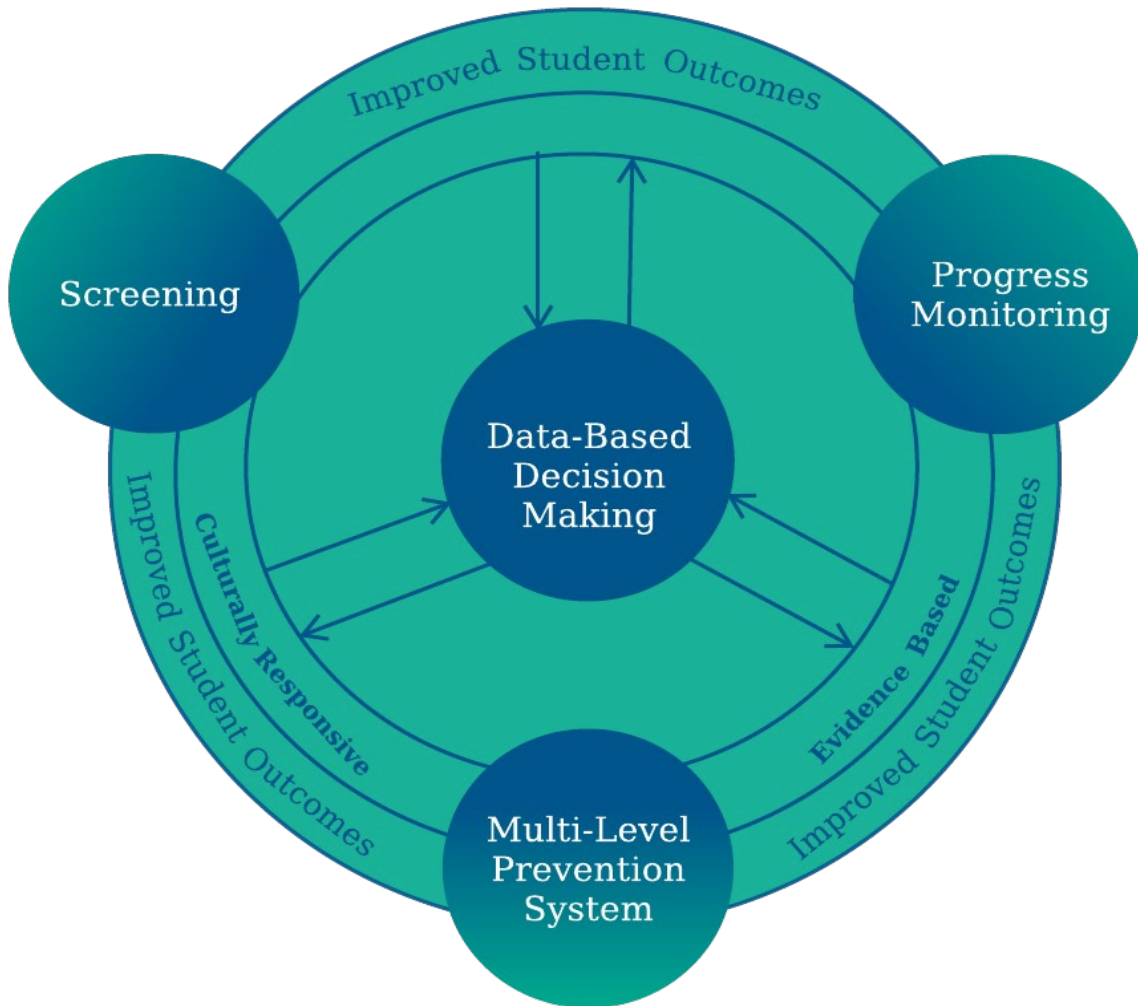
FINDING 2-11

The district has no established tiered intervention measures for struggling at risk students or ELLs. There are no structures in place to assist teachers in effectively monitoring the frequency and intensity of remedial interventions for students. Leveled or tiered interventions are lacking to guide teachers in selecting appropriate interventions to sustain student progress or help them determine if the interventions are closing learning gaps. Protected time is not embedded in the daily schedule to provide targeted remediation for skill-based flex groups or one-on-one remediation. No clearly defined early intervention system is implemented for all at-risk students. Teachers provide interventions, but there is no strategic plan for appropriate remediation strategies, how to differentiate instruction, and determining the level, frequency, and intensity of interventions.

The consulting team noted in focus groups and interviews no uniform understanding of structured tiered interventions. District administrators and teachers expressed awareness of the need to address targeted interventions and define procedures to more effectively meet the needs of struggling learners. The district is committed to meeting the needs of all students. However, no comprehensive continuum of prevention/intervention services are in place. At the elementary level, the consulting team learned there was only reference to tiered intervention and flex grouping. Interviews and focus group discussions indicated that several teachers were attempting to provide data-driven interventions. Other teachers were vague and inconsistent in articulating how struggling learners are identified, how intervention strategies and support structures are selected, and how the interventions are evaluated as appropriate and helpful for meeting student need and closing learning gaps.

The district is not implementing the tiered academic and behavioral components of RtI using the Oklahoma Tiered Intervention Support System (OTISS) model. **Exhibit 2-34** illustrates the RtI process.

Exhibit 2-34
Essential RtI Components



Source: <http://www.rti4success.org/essential-components-rti/data-based-decision-making>, re-created by Prismatic, March 2016

The research behind RtI implemented with school-wide fidelity indicates that staff will see:

- a valid and reliable assessment system in place;
- curriculum that is evidence-based and includes grade level components across tiers; and
- instructional practices are evidence-based and follow set parameters.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ http://www.rti4success.org/sites/default/files/FidelityImplementation_10-20-09_FINAL.pdf

RtI provides structure for lesson planning and instructional delivery. **Exhibit 2-35** summarizes the essential questions teacher teams need to address in lesson planning and planning for delivering instruction.

Exhibit 2-35
RtI Lesson Planning and Instruction

Adherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do you “stick to the plan?” • How well do you stay true to the intervention and not drift from the core elements? • Did you make sure all pieces of the intervention have been implemented as intended?
Duration/Exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often does a student receive an intervention? • How long does an intervention last? • In elementary schools: Providing 90 minutes of reading instruction five days a week? Progress monitoring a minimum of every two weeks?
Quality of Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well was the intervention or instruction delivered? • Were good teaching practices used? • Is teacher enthusiasm evident? • Is there adequate time for student questions and exposure to differentiation? Student groups and transitions effectively managed?
Program Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do you differentiate one intervention from another? • How well do you avoid inserting pieces from other interventions?
Student Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How engaged and involved are the students in this intervention or activity? • Amount of time students spend on task? • Levels of enthusiasm for activity? • Extent students feel they learned what was expected? • Number of students meditating with their eyes closed and heads on their desks?

Source: http://www.rti4success.org/sites/default/files/FidelityImplementation_10-20-09_FINAL.pdf, March 2016

A district implementing RtI successfully has clearly defined procedures, techniques, feedback loops, and decision-making processes within each component. The district’s plan will:

- detail responsibilities of specific persons (coaches, teachers, administration);
- create a data system for measuring operations, techniques, and components;
- link fidelity data to improved outcomes data;
- approach instructor observation in a positive manner, emphasizing problem-solving; and

- create accountability measures for noncompliance.⁵⁶

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a tiered interventions model for remediation.

The district needs to ensure:

- staff follow clear data-based decision-making rules;
- predetermined fidelity checks are applied routinely;
- integration and sustainability practices are followed; and
- staff regularly communicate using the same vocabulary.⁵⁷

The superintendent, principals, and select teachers should review the overall structures of RtI programs. They may then determine to adopt the standard RtI program or a hybrid district approach to tiered intervention for struggling learners. The review process should focus on how to increase the effectiveness of tiered interventions. If needed, external consultants are available to assist in the process.

The guide *Considering Tier 3 Within a Response-to-Intervention Model* can serve as a resource to understand the RtI process.⁵⁸ The *RtI Essential Components Integrity Rubric* and the *RtI Essential Components Integrity Worksheet* are useful appraisal tools.⁵⁹

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing Title I or Special Education resources.

FINDING 2-12

There is no designated time for the special education teacher and instructional aides to communicate, plan, and collaborate with general education teachers. The consulting team found that BCPS general education teachers, the special education teacher, and instructional aides collaborate randomly and informally.

Teachers reported that they see great need for coordinated classroom routines and schedules. Dedicated time across the district to address IEP updates, specific student performance, remediation efforts, or instruction and learning issues is needed. The teachers do their best through random and intermittent discussions. The resource room at the elementary and high school are used every day, yet there is no time or structured process for intentional, focused, and

⁵⁶ Johnson, E., Mellard, D.F., Fuchs, D., & McKnight, M.A. (2006). *Responsiveness to intervention (RTI): How to do it*. Lawrence, KS: National Research Center on Learning Disabilities.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tier3/consideringtier3>

⁵⁹ <https://www.rti4success.org/resource/essential-components-rti-integrity-rubric-and-worksheet>

job-embedded collaborative planning, scheduling, and instructional coordination between classrooms. Some grade level teachers had common planning times, but this is not consistent across the district nor are they consistently used to coordinate services.

Over the past 25 years, students have slowly been mainstreamed into the regular classrooms. As IEP students are included in regular classroom, they have opportunity to learn the grade level content. In inclusionary, mainstreamed classrooms, the special education teacher and regular education teacher must engage in co-planning to effectively guide student learning. Often the general education teacher plans the classroom lessons and the special education teacher adapts those lessons to meet the needs of her students. She may also use the lessons to develop review materials or plan one-on-one instruction with special needs students before or after the class.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement ongoing, regularly scheduled time for teachers and instructional aides to cooperatively plan curriculum and instruction based on student Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The special education teacher, regular education teacher, and instructional aides need protected time to engage in co-planning.⁶⁰ It is important to meet daily or at least weekly to design lesson plans to fit the needs of IEP students. The special education teacher focuses on the needs, modifications, and adaptations detailed in the IEP. The general education teacher and instructional aid plan ways to deliver the grade level standards and content to meet the instructional needs. Together they develop lessons, review materials, or plan any needed one-on-one instruction.

Even though there are no regular staff meetings, these could be used to routinely collaborative efforts and share current instructional practices, effective interventions, and daily remediation practices across grade levels and subject areas. Coordinating schedules with the library, music, physical education, and/or art classrooms also provide protected times for planning and communication.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing special education resources.

FINDING 2-13

The district's administrators and teachers lack a uniform understanding regarding the procedures for referral, identification, and serving the instructional needs of IEP students. Not every child with learning and attention issues needs special education services. The consulting team found no recent review of identification procedures has occurred to help staff discern this. Teaching staff have limited, random, and inconsistent communication regarding appropriate interventions and targeted instruction place before referral for testing.

⁶⁰ <https://work.chron.com/role-special-ed-teacher-inclusion-classroom-8734.html>

The district's principals, classroom teachers, and instructional aides need specific direction regarding the documentation needed, defined steps and time frames for observation, and levels of intervention tried before students are referred for special education testing. Interim services for students waiting for testing are also important. No common process exists for staff to know what resources, flex group instruction, or instructional materials are available for student interventions. The consulting team received no evidence of the district's special education referral and identification process detailed in written or digital documents. The information extrapolated from interview and focus group conversation was unclear and inconsistent regarding the intervention expectations and measures teachers should follow before students were referred for diagnostic testing.

Special education services are contracted from ABC Consulting. There were differing interpretations of job responsibilities assigned to the consultant and district's personnel. Student case load assignments for the annual IEP review and update processes and procedures were not clearly defined.

The district complies with the SDE requirements. However, there is need for local review of the special education program to ensure best practices are consistently communicated and implemented appropriately.

Some of the best practices that are part of high performing programs and improving referral and identification practices include:

- philosophy of inclusion;
- individualization and tailoring programs to student needs;
- supportive school community;
- multi-tiered support systems;
- family and community partnerships;
- cutting-edge technologies and practices;
- flexibility and autonomy;
- staff development; and
- constant refinement and improvement of programs.⁶¹

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct a comprehensive review, update all local procedural aspects of the special education program, and then communicate the results to all BCPS staff.

⁶¹ <http://www.ccsa.org/Best%20Practices%20Toolkit%20-%20SPED%20Report.pdf>

At BCPS, the principals, special education teacher and instructional aides should meet with the regular education teachers to discuss and identify specific BCPS program needs and implement practical measure for improvements. The district’s review should also include a study of new initiatives in serving special education students. Several current trends in special education programs include:

- Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP);
- Assistive technology;
- Early detection;
- Classroom integration; and
- Student-led planning.⁶²

The review needs to include strengthening procedures for communicating the accommodations and modifications needed to comply with IEP and inclusionary practices.

The special education staff should hold annual briefings with the principal, general education teachers and instructional aides to review the referral process. This is particularly important with the elementary principal and staff. These communications should include IDEA changes and time for questions from current and new staff members.

FICAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing special education resources.

Gifted and Talented Education

Chapter 8 Article VII, Section 904 of the School Law Book defines Gifted and Talented children as “those children identified at the preschool, elementary, or secondary level as having demonstrated potential abilities of high-performance capabilities and needing differentiated or accelerated educational services.” The definition includes students who scored in the top three percent on any national standardized test of intellectual ability or who excel in the areas of creative thinking ability, leadership ability, visual performing arts ability, and specific academic ability.

School Law Book Section 910 requires each school district to provide Gifted and Talented educational programs and to serve those identified students who reside within the school district boundaries. The local BOE is required to submit a plan for Gifted and Talented to the State Board of Education and to provide annual program reports to the SDE.

The required components for Gifted and Talented education programs include:

⁶² <https://www.theedadvocate.org/current-trends-in-special-education/>

- a written policy statement which specifies a consistent process for assessment and selection of children for placement in Gifted and Talented programs in grades one through 12;
- a description of curriculum for the Gifted and Talented educational program, demonstrating that the curriculum is differentiated from the normal curriculum in pace and/or depth, and that it has scope and sequence;
- criteria for evaluation of the gifted child educational program;
- evidence of participation by the local advisory committee on education for Gifted and Talented children in planning, child identification, and program evaluation;
- required competencies and duties of Gifted and Talented educational program staff; and
- a budget for the district’s Gifted and Talented educational programs.

Exhibit 2-36 shows the trend in the gifted and talented identification rate over time. From 2012-13 to 2016-17, BCPS’ rate declined. In 2016-17, BCPS was the second lowest rate among its peers, and was lower than the community group and state. No federal agency collects data on the number of gifted and talented students identified; however, the National Association for Gifted Children notes that between five and seven percent of students should be identified. In 2016-17, BCPS was within this standard.

Exhibit 2-36
Trend in Percentage of Gifted and Talented Education Students

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Boise City	6.9%	7.3%	6.4%	5.8%	5.3%
Buffalo	13.7%	11.3%	12.2%	10.7%	8.8%
Sentinel	11.6%	7.7%	5.2%	3.1%	1.9%
Smithville	11.1%	10.3%	11.0%	11.1%	11.4%
Tipton	12.0%	12.5%	11.4%	12.0%	10.4%
Turpin	12.1%	11.6%	11.8%	11.4%	9.7%
Community Group	13.6%	13.1%	13.2%	12.6%	13.3%
State	14.8%	14.2%	14.2%	14.2%	14.5%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-14

The consulting team found that gifted students in the regular classrooms were not uniformly and intentionally served. There was little evidence to indicate classroom teachers are routinely enriching and challenging gifted students.

BCPS gifted students are primarily served in the regular classroom. The gifted coordinator meets with the advisory committee to review the annual plan. In the past years, identified students participated in field trips, special events, and adventure trips. Due to declining funding, these events are no longer routine. Classroom teachers are expected to serve students through

enrichment activities, and critical thinking projects. High school students are served through concurrent enrollment and AP classes.

Often, acceleration and enrichment are confused. Gifted students may be asked to read more, answer more questions, and complete longer assignments; these are not enrichment. **Exhibit 2-37** illustrates the differences.

Exhibit 2-37
Differentiating Between Acceleration and Enrichment

Acceleration	Enrichment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceleration is about the destination and moving through curriculum. • Pacing of content and instruction is sped up to match learner needs. • The goal is to accelerate content mastery. • When acceleration is the goal, students are moving faster through content or skill development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrichment is about the journey and extending the experience with depth and complexity. • Effort is made to allow students to explore topics of interest. • The goal is to enhance and investigate. • When enrichment is the goal, connections are made to units of study with integration of real-world applications.

Source: <https://hwlearninglinks.wordpress.com/2015/08/03/enrichment-for-gifted-learners-in-a-general-education-classroom/>

School districts must provide additional support for students who are already high achieving and those with the potential for high achievement. In planning for educational opportunities, school leaders must communicate a clear purpose and common goal that is endorsed by classroom teachers, gifted coordinators, counselors, and other district staff. Gifted education strategies, when employed, not only increase the achievement of identified gifted students, but have been shown to increase achievement levels of all students, making their use well worth the investment.

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to strengthen the gifted program.

The superintendent, principals, and gifted coordinator should periodically share websites and resources with the regular classroom teachers.⁶³ The SDE also has resources to assist in teaching gifted students. Staff and PLC meetings can also be used to focus on effectively serving and modifying instruction for gifted students.

The SDE provides options for classroom curricular modifications. The modifications must be challenging and enriching to the student. The district should consider how it might incorporate one or more of these options (**Exhibit 2-38**).

⁶³ https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1IKiJPSr9d8FAjSN2sVC8dZbTwMXXhs9bDz_b6vib1Ps/edit#slide=id.p

Exhibit 2-38
Enrichment Options for Gifted Students

- **Enrichment in the Regular Classroom:** Experiences provided in regular classrooms that are supplemental to the established curriculum and which are purposefully planned with the needs, interests, and capabilities of students in mind. Appropriate enrichment experiences are NOT a repetition of material.
- **Seminars/Convocations:** Special short-term sessions where students focus on one area of study.
- **Mentorships:** A program which pairs individual students with someone who has advanced skills and experiences in a discipline and can serve as a guide, advisor, counselor, and role model.
- **Summer Enrichment Programs:** Enrichment classes or courses offered during the summer months.
- **Saturday Enrichment Programs:** Enrichment classes or courses offered on Saturday.
- **Creative/Academic Competitions:** Organized opportunities for students to enter local, regional, state, or national contests in a variety of areas.
- **Differentiated Curriculum:** Curriculum designed to meet the needs of high ability students and differentiated according to content, process, and product.
- **Learning Centers:** A designated area or portable center designed to enrich and/or accelerate students' interests in a given content area.
- **“Great Books” and “Junior Great Books”:** Discussions of great literature led by an adult discussion leader using a prepared question guide.

Source: <http://ok.gov/sde/gifted-and-talented-education-programming-options>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

D. STUDENT SERVICES

Student services are comprised of counseling, health services, and social services in most Oklahoma districts. Services provided include:

- college and career counseling;
- health education and services;
- substance abuse and psychological counseling;

- social services; and
- graduate follow-up.

Student services are evolving into a more powerful tool to assist students. They are becoming increasingly more valuable in providing needed support and guidance for students' college questions, career options, and individual needs.

Guidance and Counseling

Oklahoma State Board of Education Accreditation Standards for guidance and counseling are:

- The counseling staff, parents, administrators, and others shall provide guidance and counseling program direction through involvement in assessment and identification of student needs.
- The school shall develop a written description of a guidance and counseling program with special provisions for at-risk students. The program shall address assessed needs of all students, including those who are identified as at-risk and shall establish program goals, objectives, and evaluation.
- Each school shall provide an organized program of guidance and counseling services that include: counseling services available to students; a planned sequential program of guidance activities that enhance students' development; appropriate referrals to other specialized persons, clinics, or agencies in the community; and coordinated services.
- Each counselor shall follow a planned calendar of activities based upon established program goals and provide direct and indirect services to students, teachers, and/or parents.

The SDE publishes *The School Counselor's Guide: Developing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program Using Accreditation Standard VI*. This publication is designed to assist school districts in strengthening existing programs or developing new ones. The major components of the defined guidance curriculum include Guidance Curriculum Domains (Academic Development, Career Development, and Personal/Social Development); Student Competencies; and Guidance Curriculum Delivery.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) states: "School counseling programs are collaborative efforts benefiting students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the overall community. School counseling programs should be an integral part of students' daily educational environment and school counselors should be partners in student achievement."⁶⁴

ASCA recommends that school counselors divide time between four components:

⁶⁴ <http://www.ascanationalmodel.org/>

- Guidance Curriculum – The guidance curriculum is structured with developmental lessons designed to assist students. The guidance curriculum is infused throughout the school’s overall curriculum and presented systematically through K-12 classrooms.
- Individual Student Planning – School counselors coordinate ongoing activities designed to assist students individually in planning.
- Responsive Services – Responsive services are activities meeting individual students’ immediate needs that may require counseling.
- Systems Support – School counseling programs require administration and management.

Time allocated for each program component should depend on the developmental and special needs of the students served. While each district determines time allotments, ASCA recommends that school counselors spend 80 percent of their time in direct contact with students. Oklahoma high schools and middle schools are required to have one full-time counselor for every 450 students. At the elementary level a counseling and guidance program is required, but does not have to be delivered by a certified counselor.

Exhibit 2-39 provides the trend in counselor staffing over time. In 2016-17, BCPS’ counselor staffing was the lowest of its peer districts and tied with the community group but lower than the state. BCPS has increased its counselor staffing over the last five years, while other districts have remained the same or declined.

**Exhibit 2-39
Trend in Counselor Staffing Over Time**

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Boise City	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.7	250.0▲
Buffalo	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.0	(23.1%)▼
Sentinel	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0%●
Smithville	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9	(5.0%)▼
Tipton	1.0	0.1	0.2	1.2	1.2	20.0%▲
Turpin	1.0	1.0	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.0%●
Community Group	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	(12.5%)▼
State	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9	(3.3%)▼

Source Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

FINDING 2-15

BCPS employs a full-time, certified counselor. The counselor works hard to deliver comprehensive services to BCPS students. There are one-on-one counseling services being given to several elementary students; junior high and high school students have counseling opportunities available when needed.

The counselor keeps junior high school students, freshman, and sophomores informed of the Oklahoma Promise Program and assists students with the needed paperwork to apply for the scholarship program. She is diligent in assisting seniors with college applications and scholarship information. The counselor serves as the district's testing coordinator, tests ELL students, and works closely with the principal in preparing the academic schedule.

Recently she gave students information on downloading a bullying intervention app called "Stop it." To her knowledge, most of the students have downloaded the app and put it to use. She also is encouraging students to download the SDE Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP) app. This app uses a multi-year process guiding students to explore careers, take interest inventories, and record academic accomplishments. The app helps students explore programs of study and provides links to colleges. It also helps students with awareness of post-secondary certificates, credentials, career opportunities and workforce experiences.

Effective school counseling programs are a collaborative effort between the school counselor, teaching staff, families, and community stakeholders.⁶⁵ Counselors work with other educators to create an environment resulting in a positive impact on student achievement. School counselors' value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in their student population and community. They are culturally sensitive and responsive to student needs. Comprehensive school counseling programs become an integral part of the school setting. Counselors ensure equitable access to opportunities and rigorous curriculum for all students to participate fully in the educational process. The BCPS counselor strives to implement exemplary counseling services.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for counseling services provided students.

FINDING 2-16

Even though the counseling services at BCPS are already good, there is vision for expanding and continually improving counseling services. There is no structured time for the current counselor to provide services to all the elementary classrooms. The BCPS counselor has many responsibilities, and performs them with focused commitment, yet is visionary and understands the need to add services to the elementary counseling program.

The district population is 76.9 percent free and reduced lunch. Poverty impacts student learning. Many students are ELLs. This brings cultural differences between home and school. It was learned many students do not value education and understand how education is the pathway to a successful future. The counselor sees the need to expand counseling services to elementary school with monthly classrooms lessons that foster early intervention and build vision for a successful future. Regular visits in all elementary classrooms would allow the counselor to implement curriculum and group activities to help students with academic, career, and personal/social development. Not only would implementing a specified curriculum help, it would

⁶⁵ https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_ComprehensivePrograms.pdf

give the counselor visibility and would help students and parents be more acquainted with educational services.

Counseling at the elementary level can provide the knowledge and support that helps students who are dealing with diverse issues to develop positive decision-making skills, communication skills and to develop positive attitudes toward school, their peers and, most importantly, themselves.⁶⁶ Research shows the implementation of a comprehensive school counseling program has high impact on student achievement.

RECOMMENDATION

Explore the options for expanding regularly scheduled counseling services to the elementary.

The superintendent, elementary principal, and select teachers need to explore options for scheduling classroom sessions with the counselor. Scheduling, student need, and potential curriculum need to be examined. The elementary school years set the tone for developing the knowledge, attitudes and skill necessary for children to become healthy, competent and confident learners. The district needs to determine how the counselor can expand services and provide counseling education, prevention, early identification, and intervention that can help elementary children achieve academic success.

FISCAL IMPACT

Chapter one of this report recommended the creation of a second counselor position. In expanding elementary counseling services, there is ample free digital material that is adaptable to the specific needs of BCPS students. Another option available is to purchase a formalized counseling curriculum which may include demographic data analysis, student assessments, and evidence-based activities and outcomes.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Purchase appropriate elementary counseling curriculum.	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 2-17

The BCPS library program seeks to integrate library services into curriculum content and is targeted towards supporting students in learning curriculum content and skills. The BCPS librarians recently purchased new books and materials aligned with the instructional and curricular needs of teachers and students. The elementary library aide works with teachers to find reading materials that meet learning needs of all students, including ELLs. At the high school, the consulting team observed students visiting the library to be engaged and orderly. The librarian often covers classrooms for absent teachers. In her absence, the students using the library were honoring the established procedures, and behaving appropriately. Teachers reported

⁶⁶ <http://www.school-counselor.org/elementary-school-counseling.html>

the purchase of novels and secondary reading materials that coordinate with classroom content and standards. **Exhibit 2-40** reports the results from the staff survey regarding the library.

Exhibit 2-40
Staff Survey Results Regarding the Library

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school library meets the needs of the teachers and students.	17%	83%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

Effective library programs are a critical element of today's effective schools. A successful library program is one that works with classroom teachers to identify materials that best support and enrich an instructional unit. Librarians are essential in teaching information literacy skills to students. Current library programs must be based on open doors and flexible scheduling.⁶⁷ The library media specialists and classroom teachers need to engage in collaborative planning and the delivery of information that enables students to learn the foundations needed to become information literate.

COMMENDATION

BCPS librarians are commended for supporting the needs of teachers and students.

⁶⁷ <http://www.ala.org/tools/research/librariesmatter/highly-effective-school-libraries-have-common-set-characteristics>

Chapter 3:
Business Operations

Chapter 3

Business Operations

This chapter addresses the business operations of Boise City Public Schools (BCPS) and is divided into the following sections:

- A. Planning and Budgeting
- B. Financial Processes
- C. Asset and Risk Management
- D. Activity Funds
- E. Auditing and Internal Controls

Financial, asset, and risk management in school districts require thoughtful planning and decision-making. Public school districts must meet or exceed increasingly rigorous academic standards without exceeding their budgetary resources. The superintendent and board of education must ensure that the district receives all available revenue from local, state, and federal sources and expends those funds in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies so that the district can best meet or exceed the established academic standards.

Background

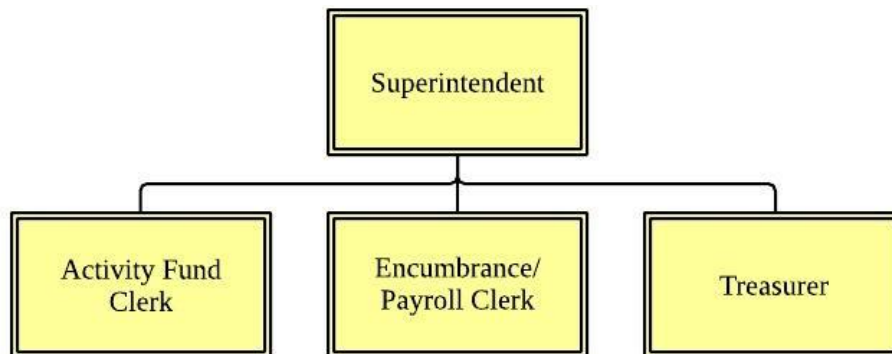
Oklahoma law entrusts a school district's board of education with specific responsibilities, including the oversight of investments and funds. The board of education (BOE) is allowed to contract with the county treasurer for the management of its accounts, or it may choose to appoint a treasurer.

The BCPS superintendent oversees business services and is assisted by three employees who perform various business service functions. The encumbrance clerk and payroll clerk is the same employee and processes all encumbrances, purchasing documents, payments to vendors, and processes the district's payroll and insurance. The treasurer is part-time and performs all treasurer duties, including reconciling bank statements, making bond payments, and preparing board reports.¹ The activity clerk is responsible for all financial transactions pertaining to student activity funds.² **Exhibit 3-1** shows the organizational structure of BCPS' business operations.

¹ She also works at a local bank.

² She is also the high school secretary.

**Exhibit 3-1
BCPS Business Operations Organizational Structure**



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2019

Financial Statements

Financial statements for BCPS are prepared based upon Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) that require funds to be combined by fund type, and for the financial statements to be prepared based on these combined funds. The accounts of the district are organized based on funds, each of which is a separate entity. The operations of each fund are accounted for by providing a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprise its assets, liabilities, fund balances, revenues, and expenditures.

The district’s financial statements are prepared on a prescribed procedure of accounting that demonstrates compliance with the cash basis and budget laws of the State of Oklahoma. Revenues are recorded as received in cash, except for revenues susceptible to accrual and material revenues that are not received at the standard time of receipt. Expenditures are recorded in the accounting period in which the fund liability is incurred and encumbered. BCPS prepares financial statements that include the fund types illustrated in **Exhibit 3-2**.

**Exhibit 3-2
Funds Contained in the 2018 BCPS Annual Financial Report**

Type	Purpose
General Fund	To account for all revenue and expenditures applicable to the general operations of the district.
Special Revenue Funds	To account for the financial activity of the building and child nutrition funds.
Debt Service Fund	To account for the revenue received from ad valorem taxes dedicated to the repayment of bonds and the subsequent payment of debt service.
Bond or Capital Projects Fund	To account for monies received from the sale of bonds for specific capital projects that span several years.
Agency Fund	To account for the activities of various student groups.

Source: BCPS Annual Financial Report, June 30, 2018

Oklahoma Cost Accounting System

Oklahoma Statutes, *Title 70, Section 5-135.2*, require school districts to report financial transactions for all funds using the Oklahoma Cost Accounting System (OCAS). Policies and procedures set forth in OCAS describe the basis of funding of Oklahoma public schools, the duties and procedures for the financial operations of the district, and the role of the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) and the district in receiving, dispensing, reporting, and accounting for school funds.

BOEs, superintendents, business managers, encumbrance clerks, treasurers, independent auditors, and other parties with responsibilities for school budgets and the administration of school district funds must be familiar with OCAS policies and procedures. A district's annual audited financial statements must include all necessary financial information and related disclosures as prescribed by OCAS.

Revenue Sources

General fund revenues from state sources for current operations are governed primarily by the State Aid Formula under the provisions of *Title 70, Article XVIII. B. Section 200* of the School Law Book. The Oklahoma State Board of Education administers the allocation of state funding to school districts based upon state aid factors, the weighted average district membership, and several categories of prior year revenues.

Intermediate revenue sources primarily represent a four mill levy assessed on a countywide basis and distributed to the county school districts based upon average daily membership for the preceding school year. Local sources of funding are derived from ad valorem (property) taxes assessed each year by the district pursuant to *Article X, Section 9* of the Oklahoma Constitution. These taxes consist of the following components:

- no less than five mills of a total of 15 mills levied for county, municipal, and school district purposes;
- 15 mills levied specifically for school district purposes;
- an emergency levy of five mills; and
- ten mills levied for local support.

A mill is the equivalent of \$1 per \$1,000 or (1/10 of a penny) of net asset valuation.

Assessment ratios for real and personal property are determined locally by each individual county assessor within guidelines established by the State Board of Equalization and the Oklahoma Tax Commission. Property within the BCPS district boundary had a net valuation of \$39,530,832 in 2017 and \$39,587,256 in 2016. The millage rate levied was 62.33 in 2017 and 62.50 in 2016.

State funds and ad valorem taxes are accounted for in the general fund of the district, which is authorized pursuant to *Title 70, Section 1-117*, Oklahoma Statutes 2001, as amended pursuant to *Article X, Section 9*, of the Oklahoma Constitution. The purpose of the general fund is to pay for operations. School districts are not authorized to use these revenues for capital expenditures as defined in the statutes.

Ad valorem taxes for bond issues are required by statute to be collected by the county treasurer and remitted to the school district for deposit into the sinking fund. The total debt service requirements may be reduced by any surplus from the prior fiscal year or any direct contributions made into the sinking fund.

Ad valorem tax rates for sinking fund purposes are determined by ascertaining the actual dollars of revenues required for payment of principal and interest on indebtedness, fees, and judicial judgments. A reserve for delinquent taxes, in an amount of not less than five percent and not more than 20 percent of the net required tax collections, is added to the required debt service collections.

The revenue requirements for both debt service and general fund are then divided by the total assessed valuation of all taxable property within the district. Multiplying the resulting quotient by 100 results in the tax rate expressed as a percent; multiplying the resulting quotient by 1,000 results in the tax rate expressed in mills.

Between 2012-13 and 2016-17, the average assessed property value per student for BCPS had increased by 53.2 percent (**Exhibit 3-3**). This was the highest increase among all the comparison groups.

Exhibit 3-3
Trend in Assessed Property Value per Student

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Boise City	\$97,770	\$115,112	\$131,022	\$135,480	\$149,738	53.2%▲
Buffalo	\$82,884	\$77,614	\$81,009	\$81,715	\$75,974	(8.3%)▼
Sentinel	\$105,204	\$106,558	\$100,034	\$116,082	\$127,041	20.8%▲
Smithville	\$28,770	\$25,247	\$27,305	\$28,506	\$28,274	(1.7%)▼
Tipton	\$22,627	\$25,175	\$27,116	\$31,889	\$31,464	39.1%▲
Turpin	\$80,462	\$90,767	\$81,539	\$77,371	\$79,857	(0.8%)▼
State	\$43,631	\$45,248	\$47,329	\$49,623	\$49,471	13.4%▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-4 shows the percentages of district and county, state, and federal revenues for BCPS and its peers. The district's revenue percentage from district sources was higher than its peers, as well as the community group and state. The district's revenue percentage from state dedicated sources was in the middle of its peers, and higher than the community group and state. The district's revenue percentage from state appropriated sources was the lowest of all comparison entities. The district's revenue percentage from federal sources was in the middle of its peers, and lower than the community group and state.

Exhibit 3-4
Breakdown of Revenues by Source, All Funds, 2016-17

Entity	District Revenue	County Revenue	State Dedicated	State Appropriated	Federal Revenue
Boise City	60.2%	4.7%	11.3%	15.0%	8.7%
Buffalo	47.9%	4.3%	11.8%	28.9%	7.1%
Sentinel	54.5%	2.6%	13.1%	22.3%	7.5%
Smithville	18.6%	1.3%	6.0%	52.6%	21.5%
Tipton	25.2%	1.4%	7.2%	50.4%	15.8%
Turpin	43.1%	5.5%	15.0%	26.0%	10.4%
Community Group	34.8%	2.2%	8.6%	39.5%	14.8%
State	40.5%	2.7%	7.3%	38.2%	11.3%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-5 shows the trend in revenue sources for BCPS, the community group, and state. The district's district and county revenue percentage was consistently higher than the community group and state. The percentage of BCPS revenue from state sources was lower than both the community group and state. The percentage of federal funding was lower than both the community group and state.

Exhibit 3-5
Sources of Revenue as a Percentage of Total Revenue, All Funds
Boise City, Community Group, and State

Source of Revenue	Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
District and County	Boise City	51.9%	54.1%	56.8%	65.2%	64.9%
	Community Group	30.6%	30.1%	32.2%	34.6%	37.0%
	State	39.6%	40.3%	40.8%	42.1%	43.2%
State Dedicated and Appropriated	Boise City	38.6%	38.3%	35.2%	28.0%	26.3%
	Community Group	53.2%	54.2%	52.5%	50.1%	48.1%
	State	48.0%	48.0%	47.7%	46.3%	45.5%
Federal	Boise City	9.5%	7.7%	8.0%	6.8%	8.7%
	Community Group	16.2%	15.7%	15.4%	15.3%	14.8%
	State	12.5%	11.7%	11.6%	11.6%	11.3%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-6 compares 2016-17 expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures for BCPS and the peers. As shown:

- BCPS was in the middle of its peers, and lower than both the community group and state for instructional expenditures.

- The percentage that BCPS spent for student support was the lowest among all comparison groups except for the community group.
- The percentage that BCPS spent for instructional support was tied with the community group as the lowest among all comparison groups.
- The percentage that BCPS spent for district administration was in the middle of its peers and lower than the community group but higher than the state.
- BCPS was the highest of all comparison groups for school administration expenditures.
- The percentage that BCPS spent for district support was in the middle of its peers and higher than both the community group and state.

**Exhibit 3-6
Percentage Breakdown of 2016-17 Expenditures by Type, All Funds**

Entity	Instruction ³	Student Support ⁴	Instruction Support ⁵	District Admin. ⁶	School Admin. ⁷	District Support ⁸	Other
Boise City	50.5%	6.0%	2.3%	5.4%	7.7%	19.2%	8.9%
Buffalo	54.3%	7.9%	3.3%	7.2%	5.6%	13.4%	8.3%
Sentinel	50.1%	7.2%	2.8%	4.8%	5.9%	17.8%	11.5%
Smithville	44.1%	6.5%	2.8%	5.4%	7.4%	23.9%	9.9%
Tipton	39.4%	9.9%	5.7%	5.1%	7.0%	19.4%	13.6%
Turpin	53.0%	7.0%	2.4%	4.9%	4.5%	19.0%	9.2%
Community Group	52.2%	5.9%	2.3%	5.6%	5.5%	18.2%	10.4%
State	53.6%	7.0%	3.7%	3.0%	5.8%	17.6%	9.3%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

Exhibit 3-7 shows the trend in BCPS expenditures per student and overall for the past ten years. Both the total district expenditures and the expenditures per student have on average remained the same over that period, except for the per student expenditure in 2011-12 that had the highest

³ Instruction – Activities dealing directly with the interaction between teachers and students

⁴ Student Support – Activities designed to assess and improve the well-being of students and to supplement the teaching process

⁵ Instruction Support – Activities associated with assisting the instructional staff with the content and process of providing learning experiences of students

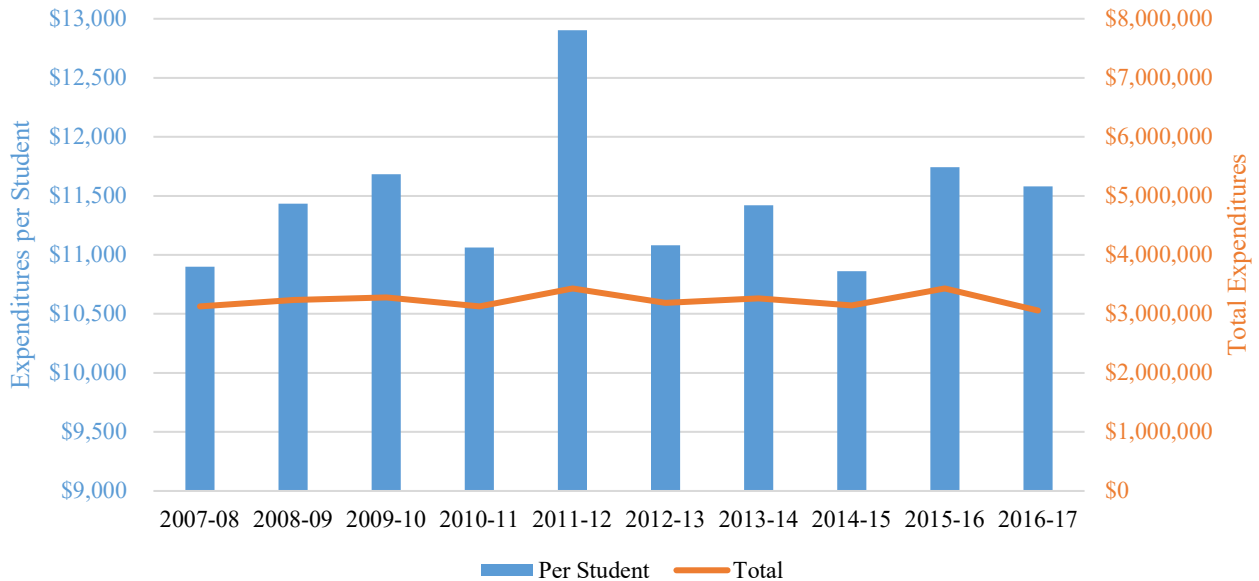
⁶ District Administration – Activities involving the establishment and administration policy in connection with operating the entire school district

⁷ School Administration – Activities concerned with overall administrative responsibility for a single school or a group of schools

⁸ District Support – Consists of central services (activities that support other administrative and instructional functions, fiscal services, human resources, planning, and administrative information technology), operation and maintenance of plant services (activities concerned with keeping the physical plant open, comfortable, and safe for use, and keeping the grounds, buildings, and equipment in an effective working condition and state of repair), and student transportation services (activities concerned with the conveyance of student to and from school as provided by state law)

expenditure per student of \$12,904. The highest total district expenditure occurred in 2015-16, when the district spent \$3.4 million.

Exhibit 3-7
Trend in BCPS Expenditures per Student, All Funds



Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 3-8 shows BCPS expenditures for the past three fiscal years, disaggregated by function code. The function code is a dimension used to describe the service or commodity obtained as a result of the expenditure. As the exhibit shows, total expenditures increased by 6.6 percent over the three years. Spending on each classification has increased, except for instructional support and district administration that showed a decrease.

Exhibit 3-8
Trend in BCPS Expenditures per Student, All Funds
2014-15 through 2016-17

Expenditure Classification	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Instruction	\$5,340	\$5,782	\$5,853	9.6%▲
Student Support	\$650	\$723	\$690	6.2%▲
Instructional Support	\$343	\$329	\$266	(22.4%)▼
District Administration	\$695	\$569	\$625	(10.1%)▼
School Administration	\$793	\$701	\$891	12.4%▲
District Support	\$2,193	\$2,187	\$2,219	1.2%▲
Other	\$848	\$1,451	\$1,035	22.1%▲
Total	\$10,862	\$11,742	\$11,579	6.6%▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database, and Prismatic calculations

Fund Balance

The fund balance, often referred to as “carryover,” is defined as the excess of assets over liabilities and is used in future years to offset any revenue shortfalls or negative mid-year adjustments that may occur. Fund balance is the amount of cash that is not obligated by purchase orders, contracts, outstanding warrants, or other commitments. A healthy fund balance can be beneficial to a school district by permitting longer investment terms and bridging periods of low cash flow during the year. Perhaps more importantly, it helps the district maintain cash flow to get through the first part of the new school year until state aid distribution can catch up with the district’s obligations.

A school district’s fund balance policy can provide guidance for the development and implementation of an annual budget. Oklahoma public school laws provide guidance regarding the allowable year-end balances. *Title 70, Section 18* of Oklahoma Statutes provides the maximum amount, as a percentage of total general fund collections, that a school district can maintain as a fund balance. **Exhibit 3-9** shows the table of maximum allowable balances expressed as a percentage of their general fund collections.

Exhibit 3-9
Maximum Allowable Balances at Year End

General Fund Collections	Maximum Allowable Balances
less than \$1,000,000	40%
\$1,000,000 - \$2,999,999	35%
\$3,000,000 - \$3,999,999	30%
\$4,000,000 - \$4,999,999	25%
\$5,000,000 - \$5,999,999	20%
\$6,000,000 - \$7,999,999	18%
\$8,000,000 - \$9,999,999	16%
\$10,000,000 or more	14%

Source: SDE Technical Assistant Document, July 2009

Based upon general fund collections of \$1,155,454 for 2016-17, BCPS would be able to reserve up to 35 percent as a fund balance. *Title 70, Section 18* of Oklahoma Statutes allows a school district to exceed the allowable percentage of carryover for two consecutive years before a general fund balance penalty is assessed. *Title 70, Section 18* also allows districts to exclude federal revenues received in a year from the total fund balance when calculating if a general fund balance penalty is assessed. **Exhibit 3-10** provides the BCPS fund balances for the last three years. From 2014-15 to 2016-17, the fund balance has increased by 21.9 percent. As of 2016-17, the district was approaching the maximum allowable balance, with 33.7 percent in fund balance.

Exhibit 3-10
Trend in BCPS General Fund Balances

	2014-15 Actual	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Actual
General Fund Collections	\$2,909,896	\$2,969,275	\$2,952,979
Fund Balance	\$815,477	\$847,387	\$993,818
Percentage of General Fund Collections	28.0%	28.5%	33.7%
Fund Balance Year-Over-Year Change		3.9%▲	17.3%▲
Fund Balance Three-Year Change			21.9%▲

Source: BCPS Annual Audit Reports, 2014-15 through 2016-17, and Prismatic calculations

Bonds

Article X, Section 26 of the Oklahoma Constitution prohibits school districts from issuing debt without approval of “60 percent plus one” of the district’s voters. A district’s outstanding debt is limited to ten percent of its assessed valuation. The issued debt may be used for acquiring or improving school sites, constructing, repairing, remodeling, equipping buildings, or acquiring school furniture, fixtures, or equipment. **Exhibit 3-11** compares the district’s average daily membership (ADM), assessed property value, and bonding capacity for the last five years. ADM decreased, while property value and bonding capacity increased.

Exhibit 3-11
BCPS Trends in ADM, Assessed Values, and Bonding Capacity

School Year	ADM	Assessed Property Value	Bonding Capacity
2012-13	287.6	\$28,118,652	\$2,811,865
2013-14	285.9	\$32,910,521	\$3,291,052
2014-15	289.4	\$37,917,767	\$3,791,777
2015-16	292.2	\$39,587,256	\$3,958,726
2016-17	264.0	\$39,530,832	\$3,953,083
Percent Change	(8.2%)▼	40.6%▲	

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database, and Prismatic calculations

The debt service expenditures per student are based upon the amount of outstanding debt and number of students a district has during a given school year. Districts must balance facility and equipment needs with the amount of tax money requested of district taxpayers. In 2016-17, BCPS had the second highest debt service expenditure per student of its peer districts, but higher than the community group and lower than the state. (**Exhibit 3-12**).

Exhibit 3-12
Debt Service Expenditures per Student
2016-17

Entity	Debt Service per Student
Boise City	\$496
Buffalo	\$1,606
Sentinel	\$0
Smithville	\$215
Tipton	\$462
Turpin	\$233
Community Group	\$485
State	\$947

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

A. PLANNING AND BUDGETING

An organization's budget development and management establishes the foundation for all other financial operations. The budget process should be strategic in nature and consist of activities that encompass the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive plan for student success.

The National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB) has identified four essential principles of effective budgeting. The specific principles include the following tasks:

1. Set broad goals to guide decisions.
2. Develop strategies and financial policies.
3. Design a budget supportive of strategies and goals.
4. Focus on the necessity of continually evaluating goal achievement.

FINDING 3-1

BCPS has no formal general fund balance policy. With a formal policy, the BOE could provide additional guidance to district management pertaining specifically to what the district's fund balance goal should be and what steps should be taken to reach and maintain that goal within the statutory maximum limits.

The district's fund balance was 34 percent of total General Fund revenues at the end of 2016-17 and based on review of 2017-18 financials the district's fund balance was 39 percent of total General Fund revenues. Pursuant to Oklahoma statute *70 O.S. 18-200.1* school districts with general fund revenue between \$1,000,000 and \$2,999,999 cannot have fund balance greater than 35 percent.

The district is monitoring the budget on a regular basis to increase fund balance. The treasurer is analyzing the budget to make sure payroll expenditures stay around 85 percent of total expenditures for the district and monitoring monthly expenditures for consumables. To help accomplish meeting this percentage, the district has hired retirees or part-time employees to avoid paying retirement and health insurance benefits.

Based upon discussions with the superintendent and encumbrance clerk, the district is making efforts to buy items in bulk, which allows the district to take advantage of discounts offered on larger purchases. The district is also using federal dollars when the grant allows and making sure all purchases have a purchase order before processing. These changes in business practices, while minor, is allowing the district to save money and increase the fund balance.

Exhibit 3-13 shows the results of staff surveys that indicate some concerns the district does not have adequate staff to carry out its operations. Some 38 percent either have *no opinion*, *disagreed*, or *strongly disagreed* with the staff situation. A majority (62 percent) feel staffing is adequate, but with fund balance continuing to increase staffing could be addressed.

Exhibit 3-13
Staff Survey Results Regarding the District

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district has an adequate number of staff to carry out its operations.	11%	51%	11%	11%	16%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

As shown in previous exhibits, BCPS was in the middle of all its peer districts in the percentage of funds spent on instruction and lowest for expenditures on student support and instructional support. While it is good practice to keep expenditures low and avoid waste, discussions with the superintendent and elementary and high school principals indicated that the district would like to add additional instructional staff to meet district needs.

A district's general fund balance policy should outline what the board considers to be an adequate balance to maintain efficient cash flow, cover emergency expenditures, adjust for revenue shortfalls, and avoid excess balance penalties or paying interest on non-payable warrants. The fund balance is a measure of the financial stability of a district and is an integral part of the budgeting process. Fund balance policies are also needed to provide guidance as to how to achieve and maintain a minimum fund balance. Districts that are fortunate enough to achieve a substantial fund balance should also include policy guidance as to what priority needs should be funded.

For example, Guthrie Public Schools has a general fund balance policy that states:

An adequate level of general fund balance is required in order to maintain efficient cash flow, cover emergency expenditures, adjust for revenue shortfalls and avoid paying interest on non-payable warrants. In order to maximize the efficient use of this fund, the BOE establishes the fiscal management priority objective of achieving and maintaining a

general fund balance of twelve percent (12%). Should the general fund balance drop below a minimum level of eight percent (8%), the administration shall give first priority to restoring this minimum level with any additional funding received and with the development and implementation of an appropriate expenditure strategy.

Each year beginning in January or February, the assistant superintendent in Guthrie Public Schools prepares an informative monthly document titled Fund Balance Projection. **Exhibit 3-14** shows a sample of the data included in that report.

Exhibit 3-14
Example Fund Balance Projection Report

Expenditure Classification	2014-15 Activity	2015-16 Activity YTD Activity	2015-16 Projected Activity	2015-16 Total Activity	Increase/ (Decrease)
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE					
Current year	\$2,745,439	\$2,776,000	\$0	\$2,776,000	\$30,561
Lapsed From Prior Year	\$0	\$23,560	\$0	\$23,560	\$23,560
REVENUES					
Local Sources	\$4,758,920	\$3,894,754	\$938,950	\$4,833,704	\$74,784
Intermediate Sources	\$849,719	\$617,776	\$227,224	\$845,000	(\$4,719)
State Sources	\$15,047,772	\$7,707,310	\$5,737,251	\$13,444,562	(\$1,603,210)
Federal Sources	\$1,541,225	\$1,023,399	\$516,958	\$1,540,357	(\$868)
Non-Revenue Receipts	\$223,533	\$48,579	\$161,421	\$210,000	(\$13,533)
Total Revenues	\$22,421,169	\$13,291,818	\$7,581,805	\$20,873,623	(\$1,547,546)
EXPENDITURES					
Total Expenditures	\$22,390,608	\$21,329,397	\$540,382	\$21,869,778	(\$520,830)
ENDING FUND BALANCE	\$2,776,000	(\$5,238,018)	\$7,041,424	\$1,803,405	(\$972,595)

Source: Guthrie Public Schools, February 2016

Keeping all board members informed on the status of the general fund is extremely important in order to manage the finances of a district. Reports that not only show the financial activity that has occurred but also includes projections to the end of the year based upon actual year-to-date data prepared by an informed district official are effective in providing board members with an understanding of the status of the general fund balance.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has developed standards for fund balance and recommends that:

- Governmental agencies establish a fund balance policy setting forth unreserved balances.

-
- The level of these recommended unreserved balances are based on unique characteristics and needs.
 - Unreserved balances are no less than five percent of general operating revenues or no less than one or two months of regular general fund operating expenditures.
 - Accountability measures consider long-term forecasting.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a formal policy for the district's general fund balance that establishes a fund balance target range, provides guidance on how to maintain the minimum balance, and requires reports for fund balance status to the BOE.

The district is four percent or \$109,000 over the allowable fund balance maximum. The district has current needs (increase in teachers, increase in custodial staff, and facility upgrades) that could be addressed with the use of some of the fund balance.

The BOE should provide guidance through the fund balance policy that establishes a fund balance target range, how to maintain the balance, and the use of the district's fund balance that exceeds the target amount. This should help ensure that the funds are only used for critical priority items and the district is not assessed an excess balance penalty. Reports to the BOE will help the members to monitor the fund balance and have an understanding of the impact of actions that effect the balance.

The consulting team suggests that BCPS should aim to meet a standard of maintaining at least two months of regular general fund operating expenditures as recommended by the GFOA. In 2016-17, general fund expenditures totaled \$2,807,140, so the district should aim to maintain a balance of at least \$467,857, which is approximately two months (or one-sixth) of the total expenditures.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-2

Currently, the percentage of funds expended on student and instructional support is low. The district does not have specific goals or plans to increase the percentage of funds expended on student or instructional support (**Exhibit 3-15**). The district is the lowest in student and instructional support expenditures among the comparison groups.

Exhibit 3-15
Percentage of Funds Spent on Student and Instruction Support

Entity	Student Support ⁹	Instruction Support ¹⁰
Boise City	6.0%	2.3%
Buffalo	7.9%	3.3%
Sentinel	7.2%	2.8%
Smithville	6.5%	2.8%
Tipton	9.9%	5.7%
Turpin	7.0%	2.4%
Community Group	5.9%	2.3%
State	7.0%	3.7%

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

By not receiving additional revenues from bonding, BCPS has had no other choice but to support a much broader array of expenditures from its general fund than would normally be expected. As a result, money has had to be directed away from the district's primary mission of student and instructional support.

Exhibit 3-8 indicated that spending for instructional support has decreased by the largest percentage and student support has increased by the second lowest among the classifications. Moreover, the total expended on instructional support per student has decreased each year over the last three years, a 22.4 percent decrease from 2014-15 through 2016-17.

Pro-active school districts review historical expenditures when developing the budget and identify any trends that should be closely monitored or reversed. In reviewing the actual expenditure trends, any incorrect classifications or changes in how the district classifies expenses can also be identified and corrected.

Districts review historical expenditures, not only the dollar amount of the expenditures, but also the dollar amount as a percentage of the total. If one category is out of line, such as other support services, districts should make an adjustment. The priority should always be on classroom instructional and the students.

RECOMMENDATION

Place special emphasis on the percentage of district funds being budgeted for student and instructional support during budget development and in future budget years establish a target percentage.

⁹ Student Support – Activities designed to assess and improve the well-being of students and to supplement the teaching process

¹⁰ Instruction Support – Activities associated with assisting the instructional staff with the content and process of providing learning experiences of students

Although activities other than classroom instruction certainly are necessary to support the education of students, they must be kept in perspective. The primary focus of BCPS must be on providing the highest quality, most cost-effective public education available to its students.

The superintendent should analyze historical expenditures and establish recommended budget targets for board approval in order to increase funding percentages for student and instructional support. The district should also establish a budget target for each category of expenditures. The target should involve two components: the percentage of the total budget that should be allocated to each function and the percentage change over time in the allocation to each function. If the district closely monitors these indicators, it can manage its expenditures and ensure that the dollar allocation shifts closer to the board-adopted targets.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-3

The community supports the district through raising funds to support district needs, feeding programs for children, and volunteering for classroom or school projects. Two local churches are offering feeding programs for kids that need to eat¹¹ and community members will help the school fundraise.

Having community support ensures the district will have adequate funds to meet the needs of the students. The community is one of the most important resources in helping the district go above and beyond, resulting in improved outcomes and overall district performance.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for getting the community behind their efforts and keeping them involved.

Moving forward, it is recommended that the district build the support of the community. The superintendent can develop an advisory council and invite community members to a short meeting to present a state of the district speech. This should be done once or twice a year.

FINDING 3-4

There is limited public and staff involvement in the budget development process. The public is not provided any means to be involved in the budget development process and meetings are not held to obtain internal stakeholder involvement. A budget calendar is not produced for the budget development process.

The BCPS budget is developed by the superintendent, encumbrance clerk, and principals. These staff members use the previous year's revenues and expenditures and the Estimate of Needs to

¹¹ How these programs are operated are discussed further in chapter five of this report.

determine the budget for the current school year. The budget is based on staffing, curriculum, child nutrition, facility, and transportation needs, as well as other projected expenditures.

Although districts are not required to follow the *School District Budget Act* (Title 70 O.S. § 5-155) the district does, “make available to the public and investors sufficient information as to the financial conditions, requirements, and expectations of the school district.” *OAC 210:35-3-166(a)* states:

The principal shall be responsible for planning and administering the school site budget as approved by the local BOE. The principal shall involve the staff in the preliminary development of the budget, in establishing expenditure allocations, and setting priorities within the budget.

The GFOA recommends that a school district budget be developed using a results and outcomes approach. Using this approach, the budget should be developed to address the highest priorities of the district that could be achieved with the available resources. For example, if the district identified a need for additional staff members, the budget would be developed to incorporate this need, and, subsequently, be communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

Many districts have a budget committee comprised of community members, business leaders, and district employees who provide input to the BOE and superintendent on the priorities that should be addressed. Some Oklahoma public school districts use a budget committee that provides regular input to the superintendent and treasurer during the budget process. Other districts publish their budget materials and related information on their websites to ensure that all stakeholders are informed of budget processes and decisions that are being made.

At the time it was reviewed under the Oklahoma School Performance Review process, Clinton Public Schools had a transparent budget development process with a commendable level of public input. The process for budget development in Clinton involved these steps:

1. **Preliminary Budget:** Prior to the end of the current fiscal year, the superintendent and other key administrators prioritized items for the following fiscal year. Many contributions for this process came from school employees and the public.
2. **Preparation of Proposed Budget:** After the BOE approved the estimate of needs, proposed budgets were devised within the approved revenues and expenditures for the budget year.
3. **Receipt of Public Comments:** The BOE conducted a public hearing to take all comments on financial matters, both past and future, in the district.
4. **Adoption of a Final Budget:** This included any revisions due to public comments and potential program allocations received prior to this date.
5. **Amending of Final Budget:** Changes were made throughout the year to ensure that all expenditures had an appropriate amount of budgeted funds available and to adapt the current budget to reflect midterm allocation changes.

RECOMMENDATION**Include a variety of stakeholders in the budgetary process.**

As a best practice, districts should include a variety of stakeholders in the budgetary process. These stakeholders should include the principals, facilities/transportation director, and cafeteria manager. A teacher and parent representative could also be included in the process. The goal should be more transparency, communication, and input regarding the process.

The superintendent and BOE should adopt and publish an annual budget calendar and create a budget advisory committee. The budgetary process and timeline should be communicated throughout the district in order to foster transparency. Budget discussions for the upcoming school year should begin early in the spring semester at the latest. Budget discussions should include opportunities for input from district and community stakeholders.

Posting the budgetary process, timeline, and documents in public places and online will facilitate better communication, understanding, and support of the adopted budget. A sample budget calendar from another Oklahoma school district is provided in **Exhibit 3-16**. Each year, the district adjusts these dates by one or two days to match the new work calendar, but the process typically follows this schedule.

Exhibit 3-16
Sample Budget Calendar

Date	Budget Activity
October 3	Introduction of budget process to principals and administrative staff
October 16	Submission of budget calendar to BOE (regular meeting)
	Establishment of December date for public hearing on budget
October 20	Preliminary administrative staff budget committee meeting #1
	Review of budget process assignments and calendar
October 30	Administrative budget committee meeting #2
	Establish preliminary overall budget priorities
October 31	Submission of budget requests by principals and administrative staff
November 20	Public reminder concerning December date for public hearing on budget
November 27	Administrative budget committee meeting #3
	Analysis of budget requests and review of preliminary priorities
	Preliminary report on market analysis of cohort school districts
November 29	Advertise for December public hearing
December 4	Advertise for December public hearing
December 4	Annual BOE legislative work session
December 8	Administrative budget committee meeting #4
	Refinement and alignment of projected expenditures
December 11	Public hearing on proposed budget (regular meeting)
	Report to BOE on preliminary budget priorities (regular meeting)
	Invitation for BOE member input on preliminary budget priorities
December 18	Administrative budget committee meeting #5
January 8	Analysis of preliminary budget priorities
	Review of projected state revenues based on the state proposed budget
January 11	Administrative budget committee meeting #6
	Refinement of budget priorities based on BOE work session
January 22	Presentation of projected state revenues based on state proposed budget
	Invitation for further BOE member input on budget
January 25	Administrative budget committee meeting #7
	Refinement of budget priorities based on public hearing and board member input
February 5	Presentation of first formal draft of budget
February 7	Administrative budget committee meeting #8
	Refinement of budget priorities
February 19	Presentation of second formal draft of budget (regular meeting)
	Update on projected state revenues
March 8	Administrative budget committee meeting #9
March 19	Target date for BOE approval of budget (regular meeting)
May TBD	Called meeting for BOE certification of final budget April 25-May 4
May 7	Target date for issuance of professional personnel contracts
May 21	Target date for issuance of classified personnel contracts

Source: Created by Prismatic, based on records from an Oklahoma school district, November 2015

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

B. FINANCIAL PROCESSES

Day-to-day financial processes should be efficient and effective. They should also be documented, transparent, and rational. Accounting and payroll are among the most important business functions performed by a school district. Although regulations such as the OCAS and other accounting standards exist, actual practices can vary widely among Oklahoma school districts.

A sound accounting and payroll system can provide numerous benefits including:

- providing internal controls and safeguards;
- providing timely reporting on the status of funds; and
- allowing systematic disbursements to maximize available funds.

FINDING 3-5

The district uses a time clock for hourly employees to clock in and out during the day (**Exhibit 3-17**). Using a time clock reduces the risk of timesheet fraud and helps ensure the district is only paying for time worked. The time clock also helps track comp time.

Exhibit 3-17 BCPS Time Clock



Source: Prismatic, December 2018

Having a time clock benefits both the organization and its employees. A school district benefits because it helps automate the payroll process for hourly employees and accurately records their time. Employees benefit because they are not having to manually keep up with time and can keep track of their time on a daily and weekly basis.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for using a time clock for hourly employees to clock in and out.

FINDING 3-6

In the business office, few support staff members are cross-trained. There is no formal plan or process to cross-train staff in all critical processes. In addition, there are few written procedures to guide staff in the completion of financial processes.

Staff members in business services do not have a complete set of desk procedures. Few staff members are cross-trained and there is no formal or comprehensive plan in place to get staff cross-trained in all critical procedures. With two business service employees having over 22 years of service and one being part-time, cross-training is important. Although other employees have assisted in several critical processes, they would have difficulty if they were immediately called upon to perform all duties of another employee.

Without written procedures, employees complete their duties based upon verbal directions that may vary or become stale. Once time has passed after verbal directions are provided, employees often begin to perform their duties differently than instructed, and employees also improvise and develop their own ways to do certain procedures. Processing transactions in an unapproved manner often leads to errors. A desk procedures manual covers each activity's steps in sufficient detail that an individual using it for the first time can perform the steps with little, if any, additional instruction. It also lists specific forms to be used, computer screens accessed, fields on the screen in which to enter information, as well as identifying other positions that supply information for the procedure, or to which it sends information.

Relying on a single individual to complete a critical process places a great amount of stress on that employee and often requires the employee to work overtime in critical situations. It is also an internal control weakness. When only one individual is fully trained and knowledgeable in critical processes, the district is vulnerable if that individual is unavailable.

For internal controls to operate effectively, all employees need a documented reference source detailing how they perform their assigned duties. An employee desk manual has much more detail than a procedures manual and is basically a step-by-step written document approved by management that describes how employees are expected to complete their individual assignments. Detailed desk procedures facilitate cross-training of employees and training of new employees since they provide the step-by-step instruction needed to perform tasks. This increases internal control by helping to ensure processes are performed correctly.

Some business offices have developed excellent detailed desk procedures to use when employees are completing their assigned duties. For example, the payroll department in Chesterfield Public

Schools in Virginia developed detailed desk procedures that are placed on the office's server with individual folders containing instructions for each staff member, but all employees of the office have access to them. Detailed explanations on a step-by-step basis for how to fulfill the numerous duties that must be completed accurately and timely are included. An example of a desk procedure that is for a payroll process called "COBRA changes" has detailed steps that include:

1. Receive from benefits, yellow form with the box next to COBRA marked and the change reflected.
2. Pull file. (It will either be in the file cabinet or COBRA basket.)
3. Ask XXX if individual on COBRA has paid anything.
4. Make a copy of the payment sheet or check.
5. Run calculator tape of what individual has paid.
6. Go to Excel, Payroll Server, open health insurance folder, health calculation 2003, COBRA, and COBRA-newchgehealthcal03. (Enable macros.)
7. Complete spreadsheet. (Referring to yellow form and individuals file.)
8. Next to number of payments, enter number of months going to have coverage. (Will be based on effective date until the end of the year.)
9. Note: If individual is an employee, next to employee, enter yes. If not, enter no and next to employee, in the next cell, enter employee's name.
10. Note: Next to coverage for, the start date would be based on the effective date. The end date remains the end of the year.
11. Enter the amount the individual paid next to less amount paid.
12. New monthly payment date will always be the first of the month. (The individual pays monthly.) Also, adjust the number of pays.
13. Next to total payment due by, give the individual 5 to 10 days.
14. The bottom of the spreadsheet may not need to be hid depending on if they owe us any money.
15. Print two copies of the calculation sheet. One copy will go to XXX, one copy is put in individual's COBRA file, and the original is mailed.
16. If the individual owes us money, a letter needs to be sent.
17. Go to Word, Payroll Server, health insurance, and health letters.

18. Use the information from the calculation sheet to complete the letter.
19. Make two copies of letter. One copy goes to XXX, one copy goes in individual's file, and the original is mailed.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop desk procedures for each business services employee and establish a formal process for cross-training.

A standard format to use when creating desk manuals with instructions should be developed by the superintendent with the assistance of the clerks and treasurer. The superintendent should review the key duties of business services staff and develop a list of critical processes. Business service staff should develop desk procedures for the list of critical processes.

Once desk procedures have been completed, the superintendent should determine which staff should be cross-trained on which processes. The assignments should be discussed with staff and their progress monitored to help ensure the cross-training is progressing in a timely manner. An effective cross-training program for business services staff should ensure that all essential job responsibilities are properly carried out in the absence of an employee who is assigned the primary responsibilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-7

The district provides a direct deposit process for employees to receive pay warrants and employees are encouraged to participate. Direct deposit expedites the availability of funds to the employees' bank accounts, reduces the possibility of warrants being lost or stolen, and is more efficient for district staff. During the onsite visit, district personnel indicated that all employees are required to be on direct deposit.

Direct deposit benefits both the organization and its employees. A school district benefits because bank account reconciliation is made simpler and funds are debited from an organization's account on a precisely known date, at the first of the month. The district also enjoys reduced processing costs because direct deposited warrants eliminate the need to print and distribute paper payroll warrants. Direct deposit saves employees time spent in making trips to the banks; moreover, electronically transferred funds generally are available immediately.

COMMENDATION

BCPS requires all employees to participate in the use of direct deposit of pay warrants.

FINDING 3-8

Financial reports are not routinely prepared to show the operation and status of the district's child nutrition fund. Without reports, the superintendent and board members do not have financial data available that show if the cafeteria is operating in a financially prudent manner.

Districts that effectively oversee specific programs such as child nutrition provide management and the board with reports that allow them to monitor the program's financial activity. The reports contain information on both the balances for the fund and the revenues and expenditures that allow management and boards to determine if the program is making or losing money.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop reports for the child nutrition fund that show fund balances, revenues, expenditures, and whether the program is making or losing money.

Summary reports prepared either monthly or quarterly that show a limited number of revenue and expense categories would provide staff, management, and board members with easily understood financial information for the child nutrition program. **Exhibit 3-18** provides an example of a format that the superintendent and encumbrance clerk could use for monthly or quarterly reports.

Exhibit 3-18
Sample Child Nutrition Fund Report for Period XX

	Current Period	Year-to-Date	Previous Year Totals
Beginning Balance:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Current Revenue:			
Federal	\$x,xxx	\$xx,xxx	\$xx,xxx
State	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Local	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Total Current Revenue:	\$x,xxx	\$xx,xxx	\$xx,xxx
Current Expenses:			
Salaries	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Benefits	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Food Products	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Supplies	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Other	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Total Current Expenses:	\$x,xxx	\$xx,xxx	\$xx,xxx
Revenue Over/(Under) Expenses:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Adjustments to Prior Year:			
Estopped Warrants	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Lapsed Encumbrances	\$xx	\$xx	\$xx
Total Adjustments:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Revenues Over/(Under) Expenses and Adjustments:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx
Ending Balance:	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx	\$x,xxx

Source: Prepared by Prismatic Services, November 2015

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

C. ASSET AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Asset management involves managing the district's cash resources and physical assets in a cost effective and efficient manner. Effective cash and investment management involves forecasting cash requirements timely and accurately so that funds are made available when needed. Effective asset management involves the safeguarding of property from loss, damage, theft, and obsolescence. Proper safeguarding of district assets requires an effective system of accountability and a culture of adherence to established policies and procedures.

FINDING 3-9

The district does not have a listing of fixed assets and does not complete a comprehensive physical inventory to determine if fixed assets are still in the custody of the district. BCPS does not have any formal policies or guidelines to direct management of its investment in fixed assets.

During the onsite visit, the consulting team was not provided with a fixed asset listing when requested. Based upon review of the 2016-17 and 2015-16 audited financial statements of BCPS, it was noted that the district received a “Qualified Opinion” because the amount of the general fixed asset account group was not known.

Fixed asset transactions are not identified and tracked during the year. BCPS does not have a complete listing of its fixed assets where additions and deletions are made as they occur, or a policy on assets to be capitalized. Without a comprehensive listing and physical inventories, the district has no way to know if items are stolen or lost. This leaves the district without recourse if an employee loses costly equipment or if a theft occurs.

Policies normally address many issues pertaining to an entity’s investment in fixed assets. Policies cover all fixed assets and regularly address the following:

- responsibility for accounting for the district’s investment in fixed assets and the system that is used for that accounting;
- responsibility for accountability for the property and equipment owned;
- a requirement for annual physical inventories;
- capitalization thresholds for property, equipment, land and infrastructure;
- depreciation methods, salvage value, and a schedule of estimated useful lives;
- capitalized improvements versus maintenance expenses;
- reporting junked, stolen or missing property, and what approvals are required to delete these items from inventory;
- receiving donated property; and
- transferring assets between departments.

To protect its investment in fixed assets, school districts track their assets and have policies that provide direction on how the assets are to be managed. As items are acquired, they are immediately added to the listing. When the district disposes of an item through normal processes it is taken off the listing. When an item cannot be found, the situation is reviewed, and appropriate action is taken. Normally, the BOE is required to approve all deletions.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and adopt fixed asset policies and procedures, such as capitalization thresholds, surplus procedures, and lost asset recovery; then, inventory fixed assets using a consolidated inventory listing.

The district should use google spreadsheets for the inventory listing and create a fixed asset inventory policy of only inventorying items worth \$5,000 or more. The OCAS procedures manual establishes a capitalization threshold at \$5,000. Therefore, the district should consider adopting a threshold of \$5,000 to remain in compliance with the OCAS requirements. Once the BOE approves the policy, the superintendent should communicate the new policy to staff and begin implementation. This will reduce the total inventory listing and may allow for one staff member to complete the inventory count on a yearly basis.

Fixed assets policies and procedures along with a system to track fixed assets should help ensure that the district's investments are being managed as desired by the BOE. The system should protect investments by documenting asset possession and holding staff accountable for the proper care and protection of district assets.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-10

The district is currently, maximizing the potential for earning interest on its idle cash. Based on review of the districts balance sheet and bank statements, it appears idle cash is being held in the interest-bearing checking and money market accounts.

The superintendent and treasurer monitor the cash available and are investing in accounts as permitted under Oklahoma Statutes *Title 70-5-115*. By monitoring cash balances, the district is earning interest revenue that it would otherwise lose out on.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is investing unused cash in interest bearing accounts resulting in additional revenue.

Moving forward, the district should review the statute and consider other investment options that are available under the law.

D. ACTIVITY FUNDS

Activity funds are defined as funds that consist of resources received and held by the school as trustee to be expended or invested in accordance with conditions of the trust. Specifically, they are funds accumulated by district-affiliated organizations from various fundraising activities, membership fees, commissions, interest income, and donations. These funds are to be used to

promote the general welfare of the school and the educational development and morale of students.

Oklahoma Statute *Title 70 O.S. § 5-129* outlines the procedures to be used to account for activity funds. Specifically, the statute requires that the BOE of each school district exercise control over all funds and revenues on hand, received or collected from revenue-generating sources such as student organizations or extracurricular activities that are conducted on school campuses. The statute further defines that deposits are to be made daily or when the cash on hand exceeds \$100. Under the law, the BOE is required to approve all school activity sub-accounts, all fundraising activities, and all purposes for which monies collected in each subaccount may be expended.

FINDING 3-11

There is a lack of regular training for teachers and staff who handle activity funds. There is no yearly meeting to review policies and procedures or to emphasize the importance of receipting money in a timely manner. In addition, the district lacks an official activity fund handbook. One board policy exists related to activity funds, but this is insufficient to provide procedural guidance for those who handle activity funds.

Ideally, written procedures are provided to all activity fund sponsors in the form of a handbook. A typical handbook would include some or all the following sections:

- general information;
- responsibilities of the principal;
- responsibilities of sponsors;
- responsibilities of the activity fund custodian;
- procedures for fund raisers;
- procedures for purchasing;
- sponsor procedures for receipting money;
- activity fund custodian procedures for receipting money;
- important points to remember, sponsor;
- important points to remember, activity fund custodian; and
- activity fund project codes.

For example, Guthrie Public Schools publishes a comprehensive manual that provides guidance for managing school activity funds. The manual provides instructions and guidelines that cover over 30 topics along with forms, board policies, and examples. Topics in the manual include:

- procedures for purchasing;
- receiving and depositing cash;
- accounts payable;
- administrator responsibilities;
- receipts and deposits; and
- expenditures.

The handbook also includes Oklahoma state laws and State Department of Education regulations pertaining to activity funds. The manual is reviewed annually and updated as needed. It provides a valuable resource to principals and sponsors, as they manage activity funds and prepare various documents related to activity funds.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a standardized procedures handbook for all district activity funds to help ensure that funds are administered properly.

The procedures should clearly state how all activity funds are to be administered, and thus will assist principals, teachers, and sponsors in fulfilling their responsibilities. The manual also will provide a good reference for new principals, teachers, and sponsors.

The activity fund clerk should require every sponsor to read the handbook and sign an “activity account sponsor’s affidavit of responsibility” stating that they have read the handbook and understand it. This form should also be signed by the principal and the activity account name or number for which the sponsor is responsible. The sponsor could be issued a receipt book only upon approval of this affidavit.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-12

Based on review and discussion it was noted that athletics and clubs are not paying for all fuel expenses and other related expenses out of activity funds. The general fund is paying for these expenses, instead of the cost following the activity.

By not matching revenue and expenses the district is not getting a true picture of what the club or athletic team is costing the district. Instead, the district is using General Funds to pay for fuel expenses and other related expenses, thus shifting money away from instructional and instructional support.

The GFOA best practices is that all cost of an activity should be accounted for within that activity. This will ensure that the district has a true picture of the revenue and associated expenses of an activity.

RECOMMENDATION

Account for all costs of activities within the same fund to provide a true picture of the revenues and associated expenses of each activity.

The superintendent, activity funds clerk, and encumbrance clerk should require that each club and athletic team turn in all receipts signed by sponsor and the name of the activity written on the receipt. By making sure expenses are properly allocated to the correct activity, the district will see an increase in funds available for instruction and instructional support.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 3-13

The district is currently collecting all activity funds by check or cash. With the small staff, fraud could potentially become an issue. The time required for the activity fund clerk is limited because of her multiple roles within the district, thus potentially leading to mistakes happening.

The district has not had any issues with fraud, according to financial staff. Nevertheless, the potential for fraud exists when cash is collected because the activity funds clerk is in an open office. Accepting checks for payment can sometimes lead to nonsufficient funds checks being presented, thus resulting in extra time to get funds collected.

An online payment solution is typically:

- a more convenient way for parents to pay since payments can be accepted at 24 hours a day;
- easy to use;
- safer since students will not be carrying cash or checks; and
- saves time for the activity funds clerk.

The activity funds clerk can review payment history online and easily apply the transactions to the proper accounts. It will also free up time for activity funds clerk to devote to other assigned duties.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement an online school payment solution for activity funds and child nutrition funds to reduce fraud risk and provide a more efficient process for parents and the district.

The district should research multiple online school payment vendors. Some considerations for vendor selections should be:

- the processing fees charged;
- how the district would access the money;
- what the options are for families that do not have internet access;
- what security measures are in place; and
- does the system interface with the current accounting system.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

E. AUDITING AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

Internal and external audits provide a review of the district's compliance with established standards and practices. External audits are required of all Oklahoma school districts and are performed by state-approved public accounting firms. The external audit provides:

- an annual financial and compliance report;
- an examination of the expenditure of federal funds (as applicable); and
- a report to management on internal accounting controls (as applicable).

The internal audit function supplements the work of the external auditor. The internal audit function examines specific areas to determine:

- the adequacy of internal controls;
- compliance with adopted policies and procedures and adherence to applicable law and regulation; and
- efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

FINDING 3-14

The BCPS encumbrance clerk prepares the listings of all purchase orders and checks for the month. The Boise City BOE uses the listing of all purchase orders and list of checks each month to review and approve.

Prior to the BOE reviewing the listings, the encumbrance clerk encumbers all purchase requisitions completed by the superintendent or the principals. To complete the purchase request,

the board approves a listing of purchase orders based upon review of board meeting minutes. The check listing is completed after an invoice is received and matched against a purchase order. The check listing is provided for information purposes and does not require approval.

Having the BOE approve all purchase orders adds another layer of security for district assets, since the district accounting staff is so small. The listing of checks helps the board to look for unusual payments or unrecognized vendors who are being paid, thus reducing the chances for fraud.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent and encumbrance clerk are commended for providing the BOE a listing of all purchase orders for approval and a listing of checks for review monthly.

FINDING 3-15

The BCPS treasurer prepares the listings of all bank balances and account information for the month. The Boise City BOE uses the listing of all bank balances for review and analysis.

Prior to the BOE reviewing the banking information, the treasurer reconciles the monthly bank statement to the general ledger. She makes any necessary adjustments and completes a monthly listing of account balances, interest earned, unusual reconciling items, and account detail. The information is for review only and does not require board approval.

Having the BOE review all bank account information monthly adds another layer of security for district assets, since the accounting staff is so small. The listing of bank account balances and reconciling items gives the board a chance to analyze cash flow and look for fraudulent activity.

COMMENDATION

The superintendent and treasurer are commended for providing the BOE with bank account information and balances each month for review and analysis.

FINDING 3-16

The district has used the same internal audit firm for as long as any staff member can remember. Rotating audit firms usually provides a district with better coverage by having a different individual reviewing data, sometimes from a different perspective. The district does not have a formal policy for rotating or competitively soliciting for external auditor services.

Routinely soliciting proposals and qualifications from external auditing firms through a competitive process enables districts to obtain and review the qualifications from interested firms and to select the one that offers the best qualifications at the lowest reasonable price. Rotation of audit services helps ensure that district financial practices and internal controls are reviewed from a fresh perspective. According to the GFOA recommended audit procurement practices, "Governmental entities should enter into multiyear agreements of at least five years in duration when obtaining the services of independent auditors." While Oklahoma school districts may not enter into multiyear contracts, many do enter into such agreements with the mutual

understanding that the district must reapprove it every fiscal year. At the conclusion of that multiyear contract, GFOA recommends that “Governmental entities should undertake a full-scale competitive process for the selection of independent auditors.” GFOA also recommends that governments choosing an external auditor actively seek the participation of all qualified audit firms including the current one, assuming its past performance was satisfactory.

Although Oklahoma law requires that an auditor must be selected from an approved list compiled by the State Department of Education, it does not require competitive selection for auditing services. The cost is not the sole determining factor when contracting for professional services; however, sound business practices and standards of independence indicate that periodic evaluation is prudent. Many school districts have established policies requiring periodic use of a competitive process for the procurement of external audit services.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a process to solicit proposals for performing the district’s annual audit and preprinting of the estimate of needs.

The superintendent should draft a policy requiring a competitive solicitation for audit services at least every five years. He should then submit it to the BOE for review and approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 4:
Facilities Use and Management

Chapter 4

Facilities Use and Management

This chapter addresses the facilities use and management of Boise City Public Schools (BCPS) in the following sections:

- A. Facilities Planning and Construction
- B. Maintenance and Custodial Operations
- C. Energy Management
- D. Safety and Security

Facilities use and management includes the planning, construction, and maintenance of buildings, the safety of students and staff using those buildings, and the security of facilities before, during, and after school hours. More specifically, this area includes the following:

- planning and designing facilities to meet educational standards and to provide a physical framework that enhances learning conditions;
- properly maintaining and cleaning facilities so that teaching and learning can take place in a healthy and clean environment;
- ensuring that the facilities are safe when students and teachers are present;
- creating proper safeguards to ensure the security of the facilities during and after school hours; and
- having safety plans in the event of a crisis or natural disaster so that students and staff members are protected.

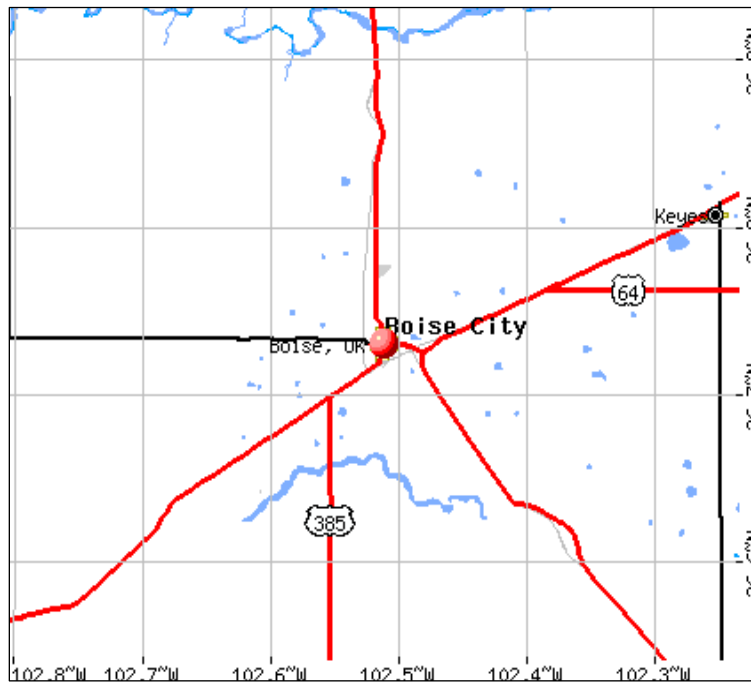
Background

Founded in 1908, Boise City is the county seat of Cimarron County. Boise City is located at the convergence of U.S. Highways 287, 385, 412, 64, 56, and State Highways 3 and 325 (**Exhibit 4-1**).¹ Boise City's estimated population was 1,240 as of 2018.²

¹ <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=BO005>

² <https://oklahoma.hometownlocator.com/ok/cimarron/boise-city.cfm>

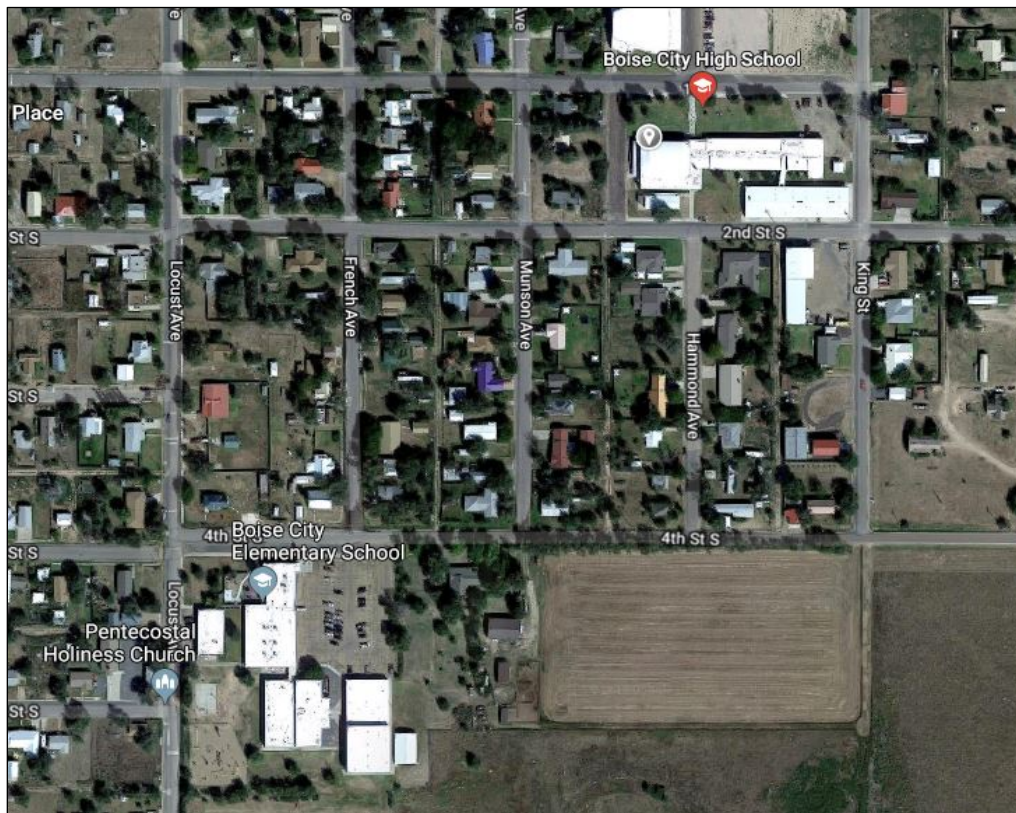
Exhibit 4-1
Boise City's Location in Cimarron County



Source: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Boise-City-Oklahoma.html>, January 2019

BCPS consists of ten major structures providing support to elementary and secondary schools. (**Exhibit 4-2**). These buildings encompass a total estimated floor area of about 115,000 square feet. Other ancillary outbuildings (i.e., miscellaneous athletic support structures) are not counted in the floor area total. The athletic fields for softball, baseball, and football are located on the eastern side of town.

Exhibit 4-2
Aerial View of Boise City and BCPS



Source: Google Earth, January 2019

Exhibit 4-3 provides an inventory of BCPS facilities. The largest two buildings are the secondary and elementary school buildings (**Exhibits 4-4** and **4-5**).

Exhibit 4-3
BCPS Facilities Inventory

Facility	Address	Sq. Ft.
Elementary Tri Level	402 SE 4 th Street	22,780
K-2 Classroom Building	402 SE 4 th Street	13,219
Music and PE Bldg. serving Elementary	402 SE 4 th Street	14,400
Special Education Classroom	402 SE 4 th Street	4,500
Weight Room Facility	402 SE 4 th Street	2,400
Secondary Building	700 SE First Street	27,822
Home Ec., Vo-Ag and Auto Mech.	700 SE First Street	11,700
Auditorium	700 SE First Street	13,219
Maintenance Shops and Bus Barn	700 SE First Street	3,165
Metal Classrooms	700 SE First Street	1,536
Total		114,741

Source: BCPS insurance carrier's certificate of coverage dated 4/06/2017

**Exhibit 4-4
Elementary School**



Source: Prismatic, December 2018

**Exhibit 4-5
Secondary School**



Source: Prismatic, December 2018

Between 2012-13 and 2016-17, the average assessed property value per student for BCPS had increased by 53.2 percent (**Exhibit 4-6**). This was the highest increase among all the comparison groups.

Exhibit 4-6
Trend in Assessed Property Value per Student
2012-13 through 2016-17

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Boise City	\$97,770	\$115,112	\$131,022	\$135,480	\$149,738	53.2%▲
Buffalo	\$82,884	\$77,614	\$81,009	\$81,715	\$75,974	(8.3%)▼
Sentinel	\$105,204	\$106,558	\$100,034	\$116,082	\$127,041	20.8%▲
Smithville	\$28,770	\$25,247	\$27,305	\$28,506	\$28,274	(1.7%)▼
Tipton	\$22,627	\$25,175	\$27,116	\$31,889	\$31,464	39.1%▲
Turpin	\$80,462	\$90,767	\$81,539	\$77,371	\$79,857	(0.8%)▼
State	\$43,631	\$45,248	\$47,329	\$49,623	\$49,471	13.4%▲

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

The debt service expenditures per student are based upon the amount of outstanding debt and number of students a district has during a given school year. Districts must balance facility and equipment needs with the amount of tax money requested of district taxpayers. In 2016-17, BCPS had the second highest debt service expenditure per student of its peer districts, and was also higher than the community group but lower than the state (**Exhibit 4-7**).

Exhibit 4-7
Debt Service Expenditures per Student
2016-17

Entity	Debt Service per Student
Boise City	\$496
Buffalo	\$1,606
Sentinel	\$0
Smithville	\$215
Tipton	\$462
Turpin	\$233
Community Group	\$485
State	\$947

Source: Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, Profiles Database

A. FACILITIES PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION

Well-planned facilities are based upon the educational program and accurate student enrollment projections. The design process should have input from stakeholders including administrators, principals, teachers, security specialists, parents, students, and the maintenance and operations staff. The selection of building materials, interior finishes, hardware, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and other major building components should be made by applying life cycle cost analyses for an optimum total cost of construction, operations, and maintenance.

This, coupled with the functional need of providing the best physical learning space possible for students, should lead a district to recognize the absolute necessity of developing, presenting, and implementing a long-range facilities master plan. Failure to implement a long-range facilities master plan will eventually lead to dissatisfaction and facility concerns.

FINDING 4-1

The district superintendent provided the start of a formal facilities planning document. At the time of the onsite review, it was not yet complete. In the past, the superintendent has made the decisions on what repairs to fund with little or no input from stakeholders.

The superintendent has started developing a strategic plan that has at its core three main goal components. These include:

1. Student Achievement;
2. Facilities and Finance; and
3. Policy and Personnel.

The plan addresses the measures for identifying goals for school operations, and performance measures along with how the district will monitor, analyze, and report progress of the strategic plan annually.

The district strategic plan is a good starting point as it outlines the mission and vision statements for the district. Creating the plan with input from the community, board members, staff and students would provide a starting place for developing relationships between the BCPS stakeholders and the district allowing input into long-range facility master planning.

A school district's long-range facilities master plan is a compilation of district policies and statistical data that provide a basis for providing educational facilities to meet the changing needs of a community. A valuable resource in developing a quality long-range facilities master plan can be obtained from the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE), formerly CEFPI.³ Effective long-range school facilities master planning incorporates the following elements:

- **Facility Capacity:** Districts establish the capacity of each school facility by setting standards that govern student/teacher ratios and the amount of square feet required per student in a classroom. These standards deal with the minimum size of core facilities, such as classrooms, gyms, cafeterias, and libraries, so that schools do not overload these facilities or overuse portable classrooms.

In 2008, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) published the second edition of *Planning for Education: Space Guidelines for Planning Educational Facilities*.⁴ The guidelines were developed to assist local boards of education (BOE), school administrators,

³ Council of Educational Facility Planners International. (2004). *Creating connections: The CEFPI guide for educational facility planning*. Can be purchased at <http://creatingconnections.a4le.org/>

⁴ <http://digitalprairie.ok.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/stgovpub/id/9456/rec/4>

architects, engineers, and planners in planning and designing educational facilities. The guidelines arrange space information by the major activities of instructional spaces, auxiliary spaces, and service and structure spaces for the various grade ranges. They also provide suggested methods of calculating preliminary net and gross square footage for school buildings by grade and major activity. Another excellent resource for facility construction is *An Administrator's Guide to School Construction Projects*, also published by the SDE.⁵

- **Facility Inventory:** An accurate facility inventory is an essential tool in managing the use of school facilities. The inventory identifies the use and size of each room, which enables planners to accurately set the capacity of each school. Modifications to schools are noted in the inventory so it can be kept up to date.
- **Enrollment Projections:** Effective planning requires accurate enrollment projections at least five years into the future.⁶ Accurate projections require planners to examine district demographics and track any new construction activity in the district. Many school planners work in coordination with county and city planners to track growth patterns.
- **Capital improvement program:** Effective planning requires the district to anticipate its future needs and balance these against expected resources. A capital improvement program charts future improvements to school facilities and identifies funding sources for them. An effective planning process involves the community at large, identifies district goals and objectives, and prioritizes projects based upon those goals and objectives.⁷
- **Facilities Maintenance Plan:** School facility planning necessitates identifying links between facilities maintenance and facilities construction and renovation. Capital outlay for school construction is generally a more palatable proposition for taxpayers and public officials when a school system demonstrates that existing facilities receive appropriate care and maintenance. Good plans include short- and long-term objectives, budgets, and timelines – all of which demonstrate organizational commitment to facilities maintenance.⁸

A long-range facility master plan helps ensure that building projects are prioritized and pursued according to a studied, developed, and logical process. As administrators, faculty, staff, and board members change, having an adopted long-range facilities master plan provides stability and cohesiveness to the district's construction, use, and management of its facilities program.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop a long-range facility plan.

Having a long-range facilities master plan will ensure that building projects are prioritized, begun, and completed following a studied, developed, and logical process. As administrators,

⁵ <http://sde.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/CI-AdministratorsGuide.pdf>

⁶ No official enrollment projections are available from any sources for BCPS.

⁷ A series bond issue represents a capital improvement plan for BCPS.

⁸ No official facilities maintenance plan is available from BCPS.

faculty, staff, and BOE members change, having a long-range facilities master plan will add stability and cohesiveness to the district's construction, use, and management of facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-2

The building envelope, roof, and HVAC equipment are in fair shape considering the age of the buildings and low level of maintenance support (one FTE). However, the district lacks a preventive maintenance program that would help safeguard its facilities.

BCPS currently does not use a work order system to track repairs for preventive maintenance. A well-functioning work order system is effective in assigning work orders, assessing time to complete the work, developing workload data, providing feedback to the source of the request, and in analyzing maintenance trends. These are all activities that are vital to a robust corrective maintenance program. Additionally, without a detailed preventive maintenance program, it is impossible to schedule maintenance activities so as to reduce unexpected equipment breakdowns. The preventive maintenance program can provide a calendar-based schedule to comply with mandated schedules such as fire alarm inspections, electrical, plumbing and HVAC check-ups, student safety drills, and bus inspections. A strong preventive maintenance program is essential to the smooth operation of any facility.

A complete maintenance program involves the following elements:

- timely attention to emergency and corrective maintenance conditions. Emergency and corrective maintenance occurs when equipment fails, typically requiring more time and resources to correct than preventive maintenance;
- a preventive maintenance program to keep equipment running at peak efficiencies, to avoid equipment breakdowns, and prevent minor problems from escalating into major ones;
- a long-range plan to address HVAC, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and low voltage systems and/or component replacements required at the end of their expected life. The plan will typically indicate the current age of the components, what year to expect replacements to occur, and anticipated costs using a Consumer Price Index multiplier or estimated inflation rate; and
- a method of prioritization of work orders so that life safety problems are dealt with first, safety and emergency problems are dealt with next, and routine problems are dealt with last.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement a preventive maintenance program.

A well-documented, thorough, and archived work order system is needed to keep track of all maintenance and repair activities and costs, performed by maintenance staff, custodians, and specialized technicians (i.e., computer hardware maintenance and repair). Given BCPS' size and internal resources, it is logical that the district would look to an off-the-shelf computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) for a maintenance management and preventive maintenance system.

Once the CMMS has been procured, staff should receive training and proceed to input data into the system such as equipment type, manufacturer and location, preventive maintenance requirements and frequencies, and other details required by the system. Staff should also account for life safety equipment, with location of device and required tests and maintenance as stipulated by the state fire marshal and local authority having jurisdiction.

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team has worked with one CMMS vendor, SchoolDude, for pricing in several Oklahoma school districts. Based upon a quotation from SchoolDude for school districts of the size of BCPS, after the first-year setup cost of \$2,885, continuation of the maintenance management and preventive maintenance modules would cost approximately \$1,150 per year.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
SchoolDude Maintenance Essential Pro. ⁹	(\$2,885)	(\$1,150)	(\$1,150)	(\$1,150)	(\$1,150)

B. MAINTENANCE AND CUSTODIAL OPERATIONS

The objective in maintaining and cleaning school facilities is to provide safe and cost-effective buildings, a sound educational environment, increased longevity of buildings and equipment, and the protection of school property. The maintenance and cleaning of the facilities must be accomplished in an efficient and effective manner in order to provide a safe and secure environment that supports the educational program and reflects proper stewardship for district resources.

Efficiencies and economies of maintenance and cleaning are critical to ensure that resources for direct instruction are maximized. However, extreme actions to reduce the cost of maintenance and cleaning can result in higher than acceptable costs of repair and replacement in the years to come. Consequently, a balance must be achieved between reasonable economies and unreasonable cost-cutting.

Maintenance

The proper maintenance of facilities is essential to ensuring support for an effective instructional program. Research has shown that appropriate heating and cooling levels, building and room

⁹ Includes maintenance management and preventive maintenance modules.

appearances, the condition of restrooms and other facilities, as well as occupant safety, all impact how students and staff members can carry out their respective responsibilities.

Ineffective or inadequate maintenance provisions have proven to lead to increased costs of facility operations by shortening the useful life span of equipment and buildings. Many school districts have adopted rigorous preventive maintenance programs. They maintain a record of the performance of equipment and the costs of regular maintenance to measure the effectiveness of these programs.

Exhibit 4-8 provides survey results regarding student, staff, and parents perception of BCPS' facilities. As shown, a majority of each group feel the facilities are attractive and well-maintained.

Exhibit 4-8
Student, Parent, and Staff Survey Results Regarding Maintenance

Survey Group	Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Student	My school is attractive and welcoming.	18%	35%	28%	18%	3%
Parent	My child's school is attractive and welcoming.	11%	74%	8%	6%	1%
Student	My school building is well-maintained.	34%	53%	8%	3%	3%
Staff	The district's facilities are well-maintained.	15%	61%	0%	12%	12%
Parent	My child's school is well-maintained.	14%	67%	11%	6%	2%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, December 2018

The district's operations and maintenance expenditures over the past five years as compared to the peer districts are shown in **Exhibit 4-9**. The decrease in BCPS' expenditures from 2012-13 through 2016-17 was 19.4 percent, which was the second highest decrease among the peers.

Exhibit 4-9
Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Boise City	\$474,224	\$408,857	\$692,618	\$464,702	\$382,386	(19.4%) ▼
Buffalo	\$349,445	\$497,446	\$367,387	\$434,881	\$447,254	28.0% ▲
Sentinel	\$327,566	\$342,363	\$342,175	\$418,652	\$319,565	(2.4%) ▼
Smithville	\$560,851	\$516,065	\$413,605	\$382,124	\$461,860	(17.7%) ▼
Tipton	\$497,156	\$671,648	\$536,695	\$405,649	\$369,757	(25.6%) ▼
Turpin	\$646,099	\$713,044	\$608,247	\$589,713	\$522,205	(19.2%) ▼
Peer Average	\$476,224	\$548,113	\$453,622	\$446,204	\$424,128	(10.9%) ▼

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2012-2017, and Prismatic calculations

On a per-student basis, BCPS' expenditures for maintenance and operations decreased by 12.2 percent; this was the third highest decrease among peers (**Exhibit 4-10**). In 2016-17, BCPS' expenditures per student was in the middle of its peers.

Exhibit 4-10
Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures per Student

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Boise City	\$1,649	\$1,430	\$2,393	\$1,591	\$1,448	(12.2%) ▼
Buffalo	\$1,158	\$1,623	\$1,306	\$1,599	\$1,511	30.5% ▲
Sentinel	\$932	\$1,020	\$1,001	\$1,187	\$996	6.9% ▲
Smithville	\$1,934	\$1,723	\$1,466	\$1,365	\$1,644	(15.0%) ▼
Tipton	\$1,444	\$20,271	\$1,672	\$1,486	\$1,375	(4.8%) ▼
Turpin	\$1,583	\$1,675	\$1,420	\$1,319	\$1,209	(23.7%) ▼
Peer Average	\$1,410	\$5,262	\$1,373	\$1,391	\$1,347	(4.5%) ▼

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2012-2017, and Prismatic calculations

BCPS' maintenance and operations expenditures by category are shown in **Exhibit 4-11**. In 2016-17, the only expenditures that increased were salaries and benefits.

Exhibit 4-11
Trend in BCPS Maintenance and Operations Expenditures, All Funds

Expenditure by Category	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Salaries	\$86,763	\$96,013	\$102,033	\$106,633	\$97,550	12.4% ▲
Benefits	\$35,032	\$37,377	\$38,471	\$46,097	\$38,159	8.9% ▲
Purchased Services	\$130,953	\$108,250	\$340,249	\$145,905	\$95,889	(26.8%) ▼
Supplies	\$174,622	\$162,411	\$164,320	\$161,133	\$150,789	(13.6%) ▼
Property	\$46,855	\$4,807	\$47,544	\$4,935	\$0	(100.0%) ▼
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0% ●
Total	\$474,224	\$408,857	\$692,618	\$464,702	\$382,386	(19.4%) ▼

Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2012-2017, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 4-12 shows BCPS' maintenance and operations expenditure amounts by fund over time. As shown, three funds decreased over the five years while two increased.

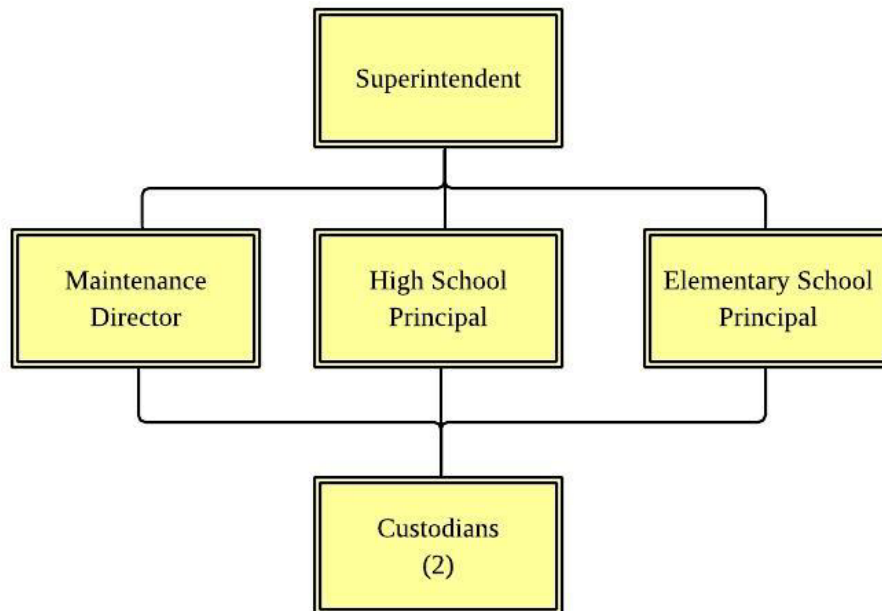
**Exhibit 4-12
BCPS Trend in Maintenance and Operations Expenditures by Fund**

Fund	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
General Fund	\$317,178	\$324,921	\$335,504	\$338,897	\$308,505	(2.7%) ▼
Building Fund	\$155,417	\$83,798	\$99,369	\$97,905	\$71,431	(54.0%) ▼
Co-Op Fund	\$1,430	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(100.0%) ▼
LEA Assigned Bond Fund	\$0	NA	\$257,634	\$27,699	\$1,986	100.0% ▲
School Activity Fund	\$200	\$138	\$111	\$202	\$464	131.8% ▲
All Funds	\$474,224	\$408,857	\$692,618	\$464,702	\$382,386	(19.4%) ▼

*Note: Column sums may not match the total shown due to rounding.
Source: SDE, School District Expenditure Reports 2012-2017, and Prismatic calculations*

The BCPS maintenance organizational structure is shown in **Exhibit 4-13**. The maintenance director also helps with transportation as a bus driver.

**Exhibit 4-13
BCPS Maintenance Organizational Structure**



Source: Created by Prismatic, March 2019

FINDING 4-3

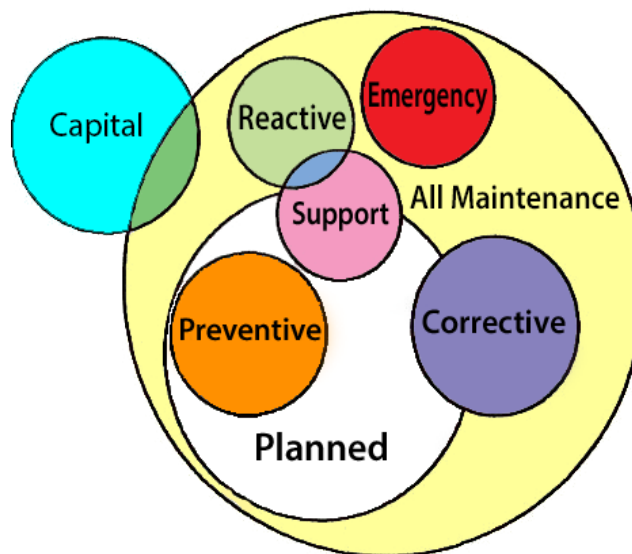
There is one maintenance FTE for the district with responsibilities for the upkeep of 115,000 square feet of buildings. The maintenance director also performs the mowing responsibilities of the district. The district does outsource HVAC and plumbing work along with hiring three students to help with mowing in the summer. The workload on the single maintenance person

limits him to repairing only emergency items with a large amount of needed maintenance work being deferred.

The APPA standard for maintenance staffing is one FTE per approximately 45,000 square feet of facilities. With 115,000 square feet of facilities to maintain on separate campuses, the district should have 2.5 FTE maintenance staff to meet the APPA standard. Based upon staff input and the consulting team’s observations regarding the substantial amount of deferred maintenance, it appears that the district has been understaffed in comparison to national standards for quite some time.

Maintenance in a school is not merely replacing equipment when it quits working. There are various types of maintenance that should be performed to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of equipment and systems, as well as reducing replacement costs. Becker (2011) wrote that maintenance can be depicted using a Venn diagram (**Exhibit 4-14**).

Exhibit 4-14
Overlap and Interrelationships in Types of Maintenance



Source: APPA Operational Guidelines for Educational Facilities: Maintenance, February 2011

As Becker stated:

The large circle represents all maintenance activities that the operations and maintenance staff may perform in a year. The next smaller circle, entirely within maintenance, is planned work. These include preventive or predictive maintenance and some corrective work – those tasks that customers request that have some time requirements associated with them and are not fully within the facilities operation’s control to schedule. Finally, hanging off to the side and trying to be part of maintenance, is capital work.¹⁰

¹⁰ Becker, T. J., (2011) What constitutes maintenance? *Operational Guidelines for Educational Facilities: Maintenance*, second edition (July/August), pp.14-15.

The older a building, the more corrective maintenance it will require and all buildings, regardless of age, require regular preventive maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION

Hire one additional maintenance technician.

BCPS should hire one full-time maintenance technician, which should be sufficient staffing, as long as the district continues to contract with HVAC and plumbing companies. The person hired should have basic credentials in a skill area (i.e., plumbing, electrical, mechanical, or other maintenance skills), or be capable of pursuing such credentials.

FISCAL IMPACT

The average salary for a maintenance technician in Oklahoma is \$15.13 per hour.¹¹ The consulting team estimates an annual salary with benefits of approximately \$30,000 per year to be a typical salary for this position.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire one additional maintenance technician.	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)	(\$30,000)

FINDING 4-4

There is no formal training program in the maintenance department that provides trade specific as well as ongoing safety training as required by state regulations and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The maintenance department participates in the annual district-wide training program that provides the state mandated training such as blood-borne pathogens, etc. There is no maintenance specific training program that provides the various trade craftsmen with updated information on maintenance best practices, maintenance cross-training, or maintenance-specific safety training.

Oklahoma has adopted OSHA standards. More than 100 OSHA standards contain training requirements. While not all 100 standards are applicable to the school district and its personnel, a large number do apply.

Training programs improve employee competence and help reduce workplace accidents and illnesses. Reduced accident and illness rates help reduce absenteeism, employer insurance compensation costs, and have been shown to improve overall employment satisfaction, performance, and morale.

Many excellent training programs are available to the maintenance department. The Oklahoma School Plant Manager’s Association (OSPMA) has both training opportunities and an annual vendor exhibition where maintenance personnel can receive updated information on products and equipment. J. J. Keller and Associates, Inc. publishes the “J. J. Keller’s 5-Minute Workplace

¹¹ <https://www.indeed.com/salaries/Maintenance-Technician-Salaries,-Oklahoma>

Safety Training Talks” series that provides hard-hitting, informal OSHA and other safety training that can be adapted to the individual group of maintenance technicians by trade.¹²

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a trade specific and safety training program in the maintenance department.

The superintendent should determine what areas of training are needed in the maintenance and custodial departments. A format and an annual schedule for training should be developed once the specific areas are chosen. A good practice is to set aside 15 minutes each week for a different training topic that all maintenance department employees can attend. BCPS is a member of the Oklahoma Schools Insurance Group (OSIG), OSIG provides inspections of schools and offers safety programs to its member schools without charge, they may be able to provide the district with resources to help with the training.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-5

The district’s facilities have maintenance deficiencies that have not been addressed. Maintenance problems were found in all of the facilities visited by the consulting team. These deficiencies could be life safety and general safety problems. The large amount of backlogged and deferred maintenance in the district can be mostly attributed to the maintenance department’s one-person workforce.

Exhibit 4-15 provides multiple instances of maintenance deficiencies observed by the consulting team. These deficiencies include stained ceilings, altered electrical panels, storage blocking electrical panels, potential building code violations, unlocked doors, exterior problems, and several areas that present safety concerns.

¹² <https://www.jjkeller.com/shop/Product/Safety-Training-Talks-On-the-Go-5-Minute-Refreshers-Manual>

**Exhibit 4-15
Observed Maintenance Deficiencies**

Missing Ceiling Tiles and Light Diffuser



Stained Ceiling Tile Typical



Fire Door Shimmed Open



Altered Electrical Panel



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

**Exhibit 4-15 (continued)
Observed Maintenance Deficiencies**

Unmarked Electrical Circuits in Panel



Open Electrical Junction Box



Extension Cords Used as Permanent Wiring



Electrical Panels blocked by Storage



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

**Exhibit 4-15 (continued)
Observed Maintenance Deficiencies**

Broken Fencing*



Unsecured Chemicals



Crumbling Concrete Sidewalks*



Door with Atypical or No Hardware*



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

**Exhibit 4-15 (continued)
Observed Maintenance Deficiencies**

Uncovered Light Bulb*



Portable Being Used for Storage*



Exterior Problems*



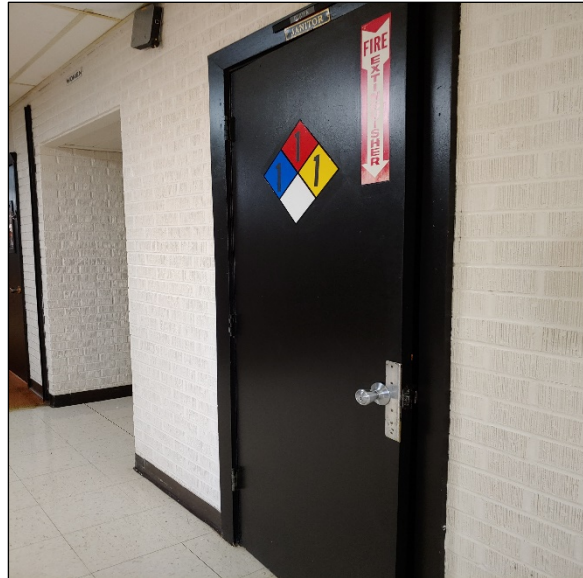
Source: Prismatic, February 2019

**Exhibit 4-15 (continued)
Observed Maintenance Deficiencies**

Rusting Breaker



Unlocked Custodial Closet*



Trip Hazard*



Unlocked Maintenance Closet*



**Example of a broader condition
Source: Prismatic, February 2019*

As a rule, waiting until a piece of equipment fails and must be replaced will cost significantly more than prolonging the service life of the equipment via preventive maintenance, and then scheduling a replacement when the equipment has become obsolete or has outlived its life-expectancy. A complete maintenance program involves the following elements:

-
- a preventive maintenance program to keep equipment running at peak efficiencies, to avoid equipment breakdowns, and prevent minor problems from escalating into major ones;
 - timely attention to emergency and corrective maintenance conditions. Emergency and corrective maintenance occur when equipment fails, typically requiring more time and resources to correct than preventive maintenance; and
 - a long-range plan to address HVAC, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and low voltage systems and/or component replacements required at the end of their expected useful life. The plan will typically indicate the current age of the components, what year to expect replacements to be needed, and anticipated costs using a Consumer Price Index multiplier or estimated inflation rate.

As noted in *The Real Cost of Deferred Maintenance*:

Facilities problems in rural schools that aren't addressed may seem to disappear, but they don't go away – like molds and mildew they just multiply out of sight. Poor conditions can affect the health and safety of everyone who uses the facility, damage the morale of students and teachers, and impair their ability to teach and learn, and threaten the facility itself.

Proper maintenance of rural schools is vital not only because facilities are often old, and have suffered deferred maintenance for years or even decades, but because the consequences of improper and inadequate maintenance are so serious. If a leak in the roof isn't repaired, it can – like the leak in the fabled dike in Holland – wash away the entire structure. If the district doesn't allocate funds to fix such leaks, or do other necessary preventive work and if state policies are predisposed to new construction, deferring maintenance may force the closure of a good rural school. Therefore, a thorough program of preventive maintenance with regularly scheduled inspections is critical.¹³

As an example, Spring Independent School District (SISD) in Texas developed a comprehensive preventive maintenance program that includes the schedule shown in **Exhibit 4-16**.

¹³ Lawrence, B. K. (2003). *Save a penny, lose a school: The real cost of deferred maintenance*. The Rural School and Community Trust. Downloaded November 2016 from http://www.ruraledu.org/user_uploads/file/Save_a_Penny_Lose_a.pdf

Exhibit 4-16
SISD Preventive Maintenance Program Schedule

Preventive Maintenance Activity	Activity Frequency
Clean A/C unit filters	Bi-monthly
Change A/C unit filters	3 to 12 week intervals
Clean chiller condenser coils	Bi-annually
Clean fan coil and air handler evaporator coils	Annually
Clean ice machine condenser coils	Every 4 months
Inspect and capacity test chillers	Annually
Change chiller compressor oil and cores	Every 2 years
Check chemical levels in closed loop chilled and hot water piping	Monthly
Clean grease traps	Every 3 months
Inspect and test boilers	Annually
Check roofs, downspouts, and gutters	Monthly, repair as needed – 20-year roof warranty
Inspect exterior lighting	Semi-annually
Inspect elementary play gym lighting	Annually
Inspect and clean gym gas heaters	Annually
Inspect playground equipment	Monthly, repair as needed
Clean fire alarm system smoke detectors	Semi-annually
Inspect all interior and exterior bleachers	Annually, repair as needed
Clean, tighten, and lubricate roll out bleachers	Annually
Check exterior building and concrete caulking	Annually – 8-year replacement
Stripe exterior parking lots	Annually
Check condition of asphalt parking lots	Annually – 12-year replacement
Check carpet	15-year replacement
Check vinyl composition tile floors	20-year replacement
Spray wash exterior soffits and building	Every 2 years or as needed
Replace glass and Plexiglas	As needed
Paint interior of facilities	Every 5 years
Paint exterior of facilities	Every 8 years
Perform general facility inspections	Annually

Source: SISD Facilities Department, November 2010

RECOMMENDATION

Inspect all facilities, documenting maintenance requirements, then prioritize the list and correct deficiencies.

Considering the size of the district and the limited availability of staff, the consulting team recommends that the district have their established outside contractors and maintenance staff inspect the buildings and create a list of deficiencies and prioritize them based upon the criteria below.

Each problem should be prioritized in this fashion:

- life safety;
- general safety;
- facility urgent; and
- facility routine.

Then problems should be categorized as:

- in-house capable;
- contractor assist; and
- additional funding required.

Once all problems have been prioritized and categorized, work should begin on correcting the deficiencies, with life safety-in-house capable and contractor assist coming first, followed by general safety-in-house capable, and contractor assist coming second. The safety of building occupants must always be a primary concern.

FISCAL IMPACT

The consulting team estimates that the hiring of a contractor to assist would have an initial cost of \$1,000. This would help with the development of a plan to address the deferred maintenance. The remaining cost will be revealed once the prioritization and cost estimates have been completed.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire contractor to help develop initial deferred maintenance list.	(\$1,000)	NA	NA	NA	NA

Custodial Operations

Safe, clean, and sanitary facilities are essential elements of the education environment. School systems across the United States use different means to address these elements. Typically, BOEs either contract out (outsource) custodial services or organize a comprehensive in-house program with staff to provide custodial services. Personnel will be employed by either the outsourced company or the BOE.

Management responsibility, if the program is in-house, may reside partially or wholly with the central office, the individual school, or the maintenance department. Determining the desired organizational structure usually involves several criteria, including minimizing costs to the school district, improving services to schools, and reducing (or increasing) the span of control of district or school-based administrators.

Studies conducted by APPA demonstrate that one custodian should be capable of cleaning between 20,000 and 30,000 square feet of school facilities to achieve a level 2 or level 3 standard of cleanliness, respectively. The levels of cleanliness in the APPA standard are shown in **Exhibit 4-17**.

Exhibit 4-17

Appearance Factors and the Five Levels of Clean

Level 1 – Orderly Spotlessness

- Floors and base moldings shine and/or are bright and clean; colors are fresh. There is no buildup in corners or along walls.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have a freshly cleaned or polished appearance and have no accumulation of dust, dirt, marks, streaks, smudges, or fingerprints.
- Lights all work and fixtures are clean.
- Washroom and shower fixtures and tile gleam and are odor-free. Supplies are adequate.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners hold only daily waste, are clean, and odor-free.

Level 2 – Ordinary Tidiness

- Floors and base moldings shine and/or are bright and clean. There is no buildup in corners or along walls, but there can be up to two days' worth of dust, dirt, stains, or streaks.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces are clean, but marks, dust, smudges, and fingerprints are noticeable upon close observation. Lights all work and fixtures are clean.
- Washroom and shower fixtures and tile gleam and are odor-free. Supplies are adequate.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners hold only daily waste, are clean, and odor-free.

Level 3 – Casual Inattention

- Floors are swept or vacuumed clean, but upon close observation there can be stains. A buildup of dirt and/or floor finish in corners and along walls can be seen.
- There are dull spots and/or matted carpet in walking lanes. There are streaks or splashes on base molding.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have obvious dust, dirt, marks, smudges, and fingerprints. Lamps all work and fixtures are clean.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners hold only daily waste, are clean, and odor-free.

Level 4 – Moderate Dinginess

- Floors are swept or vacuumed clean, but are dull, dingy, and stained. There is an obvious buildup of dirt and/or floor finish in corners and along walls.
- There is a dull path and/or obviously matted carpet in the walking lanes. Base molding is dull and dingy with streaks or splashes.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have conspicuous dust, dirt, smudges, fingerprints, and marks.
- Lamp fixtures are dirty and some (up to 5 percent) lamps are burned out.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners have old trash and shavings. They are stained and marked.
- Trash containers smell sour.

Level 5 – Unkempt Neglect

- Floors and carpets are dull, dirty, dingy, scuffed, and/or matted. There is a conspicuous buildup of old dirt and/or floor finish in corners and along walls. Base molding is dirty, stained, and streaked. Gum, stains, dirt, dust balls, and trash are broadcast.
- All vertical and horizontal surfaces have major accumulations of dust, dirt, smudges, and fingerprints, all of which will be difficult to remove. Lack of attention is obvious.
- Light fixtures are dirty with dust balls and flies. Many lamps (more than 5 percent) are burned out.
- Trash containers and pencil sharpeners overflow. They are stained and marked. Trash containers smell sour.

Source: Fichter, G., (2011). Maintenance of buildings, operational guidelines for educational facilities: Custodial. APPA, third edition, pp. 72-73.

FINDING 4-6

The current staffing for custodial services is insufficient. The district currently has two custodians that clean during the day. They are highly regarded in the district and were described as “always working.”

The APPA best practice standard states that one FTE custodian should be able to clean between 20,000 and 30,000 square feet of floor area in one day, to at least Level 3, with some areas at Level 2. At approximately 115,000 square feet the district should have a total of four custodians.

RECOMMENDATION**Hire two additional FTE custodians.**

The additional staff will provide for a second shift to deep clean after the students have left for the day and allow for some flexibility in the summer for striping and waxing of floors. The consulting team recommends the candidates be interviewed by the principals and day custodian to further develop the cleaning team, the principals should set schedules allowing coverage for sporting and community events.

FISCAL IMPACT

Using the payroll information supplied by BCPS, the consulting team estimates a base salary of \$22,258 with benefits of \$7,845. Thus, an annual salary per FTE custodian would be approximately \$30,103.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Hire two additional custodians.	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)	(\$60,206)

C. ENERGY MANAGEMENT

General energy consumption can be one of the most expensive operational areas for a school district. Due to the large infrastructure required for education, schools use large quantities of electricity, water, oil, and natural gas. Implementing an energy management program can assist in reducing a school district’s operational costs associated with otherwise excessive utility use.

Energy management programs can be implemented in a wide variety of ways, from hiring full-time energy managers to sending out simple shut-down reminders before school dismissal or before a break. One of the most beneficial practices of energy management is the recording of monthly utility bills and the communication of usage and costs to the general staff. Tracking utility use can give a bird’s eye view of how much each school is spending on its utilities compared to other schools. The energy manager can then target the most expensive utilities and work to reduce consumption. This communication helps foster awareness of the expenses of running a school and brings attention to energy conservation measures by both students and staff.

The American Society for Hospital Engineers (ASHE) has developed a list of ten components necessary for a successful energy management program. Although this list was originally intended for hospital organizations, they are applicable to all energy management programs. As recommended by ASHE, the items to consider are:

1. Measure/benchmark current energy consumption.
2. Develop an energy use profile.
3. Complete a greenhouse gas emissions inventory.
4. Build teams, get leadership support, and assign dedicated resources.
5. Set targets/goals.
6. Develop strategic action plans for improvement.
7. Consider adopting a strategic energy management plan.
8. Implement projects.
9. Track, measure, and report.
10. Train, educate, and celebrate.

The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO), in their publication *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities*,¹⁴ suggests that the following guidelines will help a school system accomplish more efficient energy management:

1. Establish an energy policy with specific goals and objectives.
2. Assign someone to be responsible for the district's energy management program and give this energy manager access to top-level administrators.
3. Monitor each building's energy use.
4. Conduct energy audits in all buildings to identify energy inefficient units.
5. Institute performance contracting (i.e., contracts requiring desired results rather than simply a list of needed products) when replacing older, energy inefficient equipment.
6. Reward employees of schools or buildings that decrease their energy use.
7. Install energy efficient equipment including power factor correction units, electronic ballasts, high-efficiency lamps, set-back thermostats, and variable-speed drives for large motors and pumps.

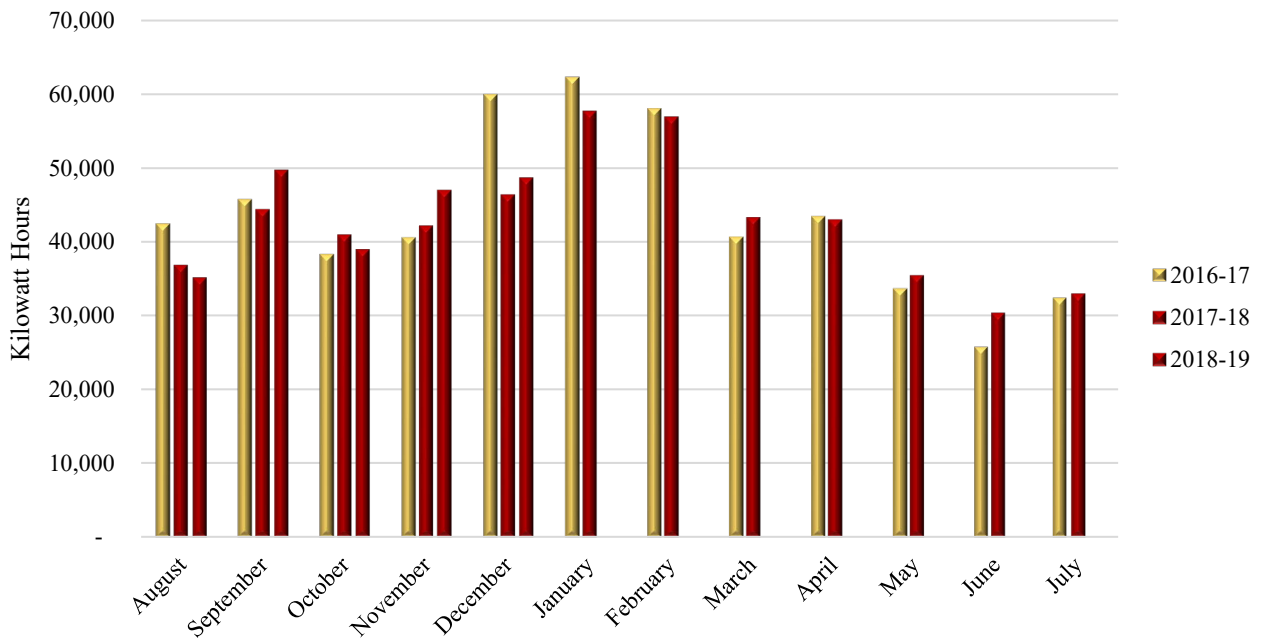
¹⁴ <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003347.pdf>

8. Install motion detectors that turn lights on when a room is occupied and off when the room is unoccupied.

Additional information about energy management can be found through the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities' Energy Page¹⁵ which provides a list of links, books, and journal articles on various methods of heating, cooling, and maintaining new and retrofitted K-12 school buildings and grounds.

BCPS receives electricity from Tri-County Electric, natural gas from West Texas Gas, and water from Boise City Public Works Authority. The district's consumption of utilities for the periods for which data were available are shown in Exhibits 4-18 through 4-20. As shown, electricity and gas consumption for 2018-19 have been higher than the same months for 2017-18.

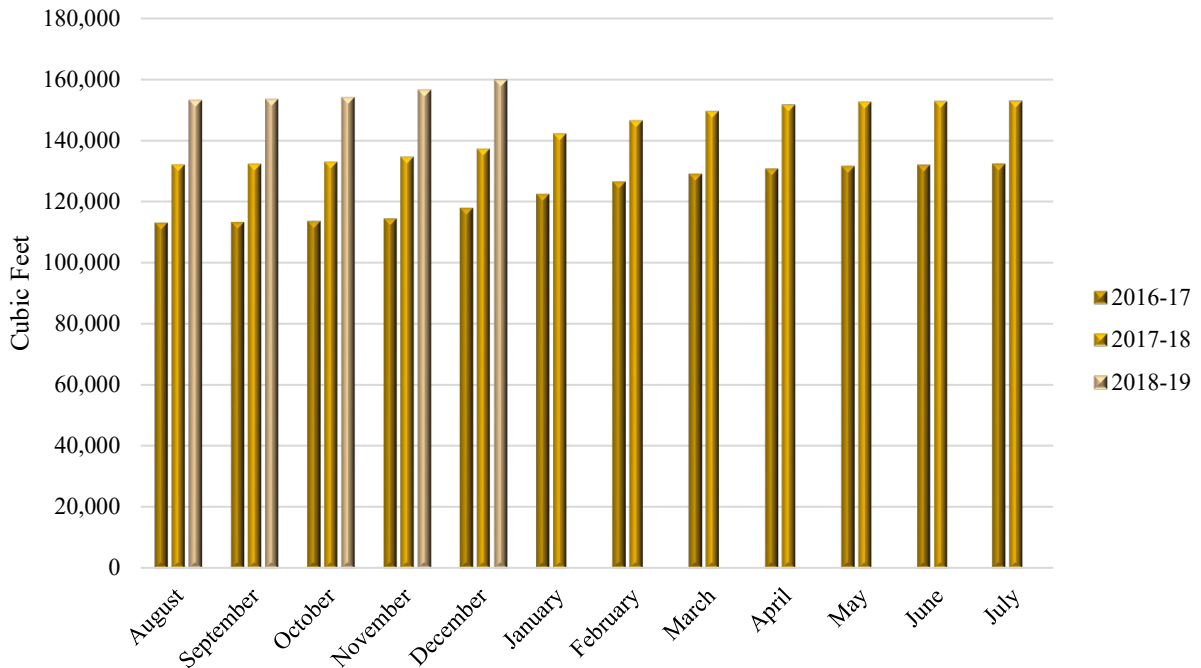
Exhibit 4-18
BCPS Electricity Consumption in Kilowatt Hours



Source: Tri-County Electric and Prismatic calculations

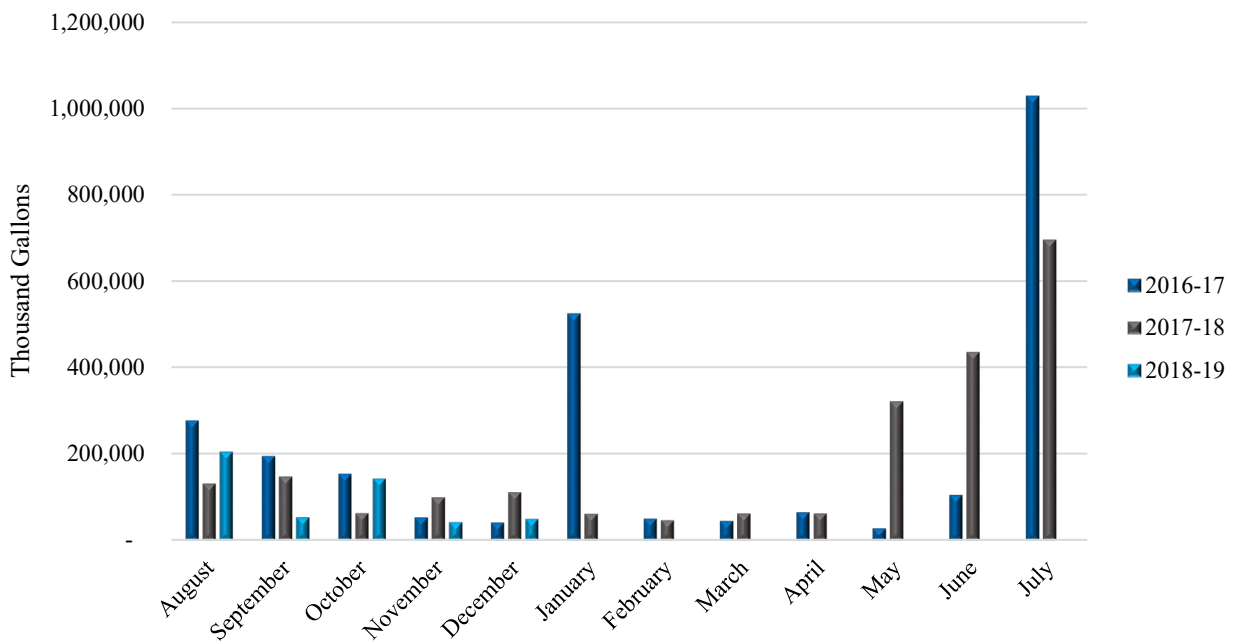
¹⁵ <http://www.ncef.org/search/node/energy%20management>

Exhibit 4-19
BCPS Gas Consumption in Cubic Feet



Source: BCPS Invoices from West Texas Gas and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 4-20
BCPS Water Consumption in Gallons



Note: The Auditorium had no usage from June 2016 to 2017 and the HS used 111,000 gallons in July 2017
Source: BCPS Invoices from Boise City Public Works Authority and Prismatic calculations

FINDING 4-7

The district has installed digital thermostats that provide set back features when the buildings are unoccupied. District principals stated they checked their buildings regularly to make sure lights are turned off and that doors are secured.

The district is working to control consumption of energy by using programmable thermostats and doing checks to ensure the lights are off during unoccupied times (**Exhibit 4-21**). The district has also began replacing lights with light emitting diode technology (LED) fixtures that reduce energy consumption by two-thirds on average and reduce the heat load by not generating as much heat as conventional lighting methods.

Exhibit 4-21
Programmable Thermostat with Schedule



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

COMMENDATION

BCPS has developed an energy management program that works for their district.

FINDING 4-8

Many of the district exterior doors are missing weather stripping. This results in a loss of conditioned air. It also provides access points for insects. **Exhibit 4-22** shows a door in need of weather stripping.

Exhibit 4-22
Exterior Door No Weather Strip



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Check and repair or replace weather-stripping.

The maintenance director should inspect each exterior door in the district to ensure they all have weather-stripping. He stated he had weather stripping available, thus increasing savings.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

D. SAFETY AND SECURITY

School districts are expected to provide a safe and secure environment for their students and staff. While districts are largely insulated from violent crime, incidents of violence at schools draw national attention. School districts must take proactive measures in safety and security even in incident-free schools. Students, teachers, and other district employees deserve a safe school environment in which to work and learn.

In 2003, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5) initiated the development of a National Incident Management System (NIMS) and requires its use by public sector agencies, including school districts. The intent of this system is to provide a common template and language for responding organizations to work together in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from incidents. As noted by FEMA, NIMS represents “a core set of doctrine, concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes that enables effective, efficient, and collaborative incident management.”

NIMS emphasizes that true preparedness requires a commitment to continuous review and improvement. Most districts understand the continuous nature of emergency management as well as the four phases that comprise the process circle (**Exhibit 4-23**).

Exhibit 4-23
Continuous Process of Emergency Management



Source: The Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools' Practical information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities, January 2007

The Oklahoma Commission on School Safety, which was created in response to the Newtown tragedy, submitted several recommendations to the Oklahoma Legislature. Based upon the commission’s recommendations, the Legislature passed four new laws. Among other things, the laws require schools to update their safety plans every year and have frequent “intruder drills,” with students taking cover while the doors are locked, and the windows are covered. The state also created a new Oklahoma School Security Institute to help schools keep their policies up to date.

Exhibit 4-24 provides student results to survey questions regarding school safety and security. As shown, a majority of students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they feel safe and secure at school.

Exhibit 4-24
Student Survey Results Regarding Safety in the Schools

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe and secure at school.	26%	42%	18%	11%	3%
The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	26%	37%	29%	8%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

The Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) reports that the state has had an increased number of earthquakes in recent years. In 2017, there were 304 earthquakes across the state with a magnitude of three or higher. Actions that the district can take regarding earthquakes, and teach to students, staff, and visitors are provided on the ODEM website.¹⁶

Exhibit 4-25 shows that from 2010 through 2017, Cimarron County has had five tornadoes touch down in or track across it. All the tornadoes were a F1 on the Fujita Scale.

Exhibit 4-25
Tornadoes Affecting Cimarron County, Oklahoma, 2010-17

Year	Magnitude
2010	F1
2012	F1
2012	F1
2013	F1
2016	F1
Total	5

*Source: Extracted by Prismatic from NOAA's Storm Prediction Center
"Severe Weather Database Files (2010-17)," March 2019*

FINDING 4-9

The elementary school does not have a working fire alarm system. The consulting team found the elementary school fire panel inoperative and power supply disconnected. District staff stated the alarm panel had been inoperative since early fall.

The panel was installed by district staff and was to be programmed by their fire service contractor. However, the consulting team was told that the contractor was unable to program it and would request technical assistance but has failed to return to complete the installation. Fire alarm systems are required to be operational by the State Department of Education (OSDE).

Exhibit 4-26 shows the inoperable panel.

¹⁶ https://www.ok.gov/OEM/Programs_&_Services/Preparedness/Preparedness_-_Earthquakes.html

Exhibit 4-26
Inoperable Fire Panel in the Elementary School



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

Exhibit 4-27 details the OSDE requirements for accreditation. The inoperable fire panel violates the health and safety requirement regarding building code compliance and emergency warning and prevention systems.

Exhibit 4-27
OSDE Accreditation Requirements

210:35-3-186. Site and buildings: size and space; accessibility; maintenance; health and safety

- **General requirements for school facilities.** All school facilities shall meet the following requirements:
 1. The site and building(s) shall be properly sized and equipped for the number of occupants and grades served in accordance with the requirements of 70 O.S. § 5-131.
 2. Adequate space shall be provided for classrooms, specialized instructional areas, support facilities and other areas as needed, these areas being grouped and arranged in such manner to provide optimum instructional function and class control.
- **Health and safety.** The site and building(s) shall ensure that the health and safety of all school students, school personnel, and school visitors are properly safeguarded.
 1. **Building code compliance.** Where required, the facility shall have utility systems, plumbing systems, electrical systems, mechanical systems, emergency systems, building interiors and building envelope designed, built, and maintained to all federal, state, and local standards, codes and/or other legal requirements.
 2. **Loading and unloading zones.** The site shall be as free as possible from hazards, provide a safe area for (un)loading of vehicles, with adequate lighting, signage and drainage.
 3. **Hazardous materials.** Appropriate programs pertaining to hazardous materials, hazardous waste, asbestos, underground storage tanks, lead contamination, and other applicable life, health, and/or safety matters shall be developed and implemented in accordance with federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, and codes.
 4. **Emergency warning and prevention systems.** Proper precautions shall be taken to prevent injuries. All equipment and facility safety features shall be in place and properly maintained, including, but not limited to safety goggles in accordance with the requirements of 70 O.S. § 24-117 and respirators in accordance with the requirements of 70 O.S. § 24-118.

Source: SDE, 210:35-3-186

RECOMMENDATION

Contract with a licensed fire alarm contractor and have them repair the system and provide an inspection tag that shows the system is operational.

The consulting team met with the superintendent and he was in the process of contacting the districts' fire service contractor to arrange for them to make the repairs to the fire panel. The fire

contractor should also inspect the system and provide an inspection sticker to be affixed to the panel stating it is operational.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-10

There was confusion on emergency procedures concerning a lock down and “what level of lock down it was.” This leaves the district at significant risk of responding incorrectly during an emergency situation.

The consulting team interviewed teachers within the district and when asked about their procedures for lock down and lock out they had conflicting processes. They informed the consulting team that they had several levels of lockdown and were not sure what actions the drills required.

- Lockout – “Get Inside. Lock Outside Doors” this protocol is used to keep student and staff in the building;
- Lockdown – “Locks, Lights, Out of Sight” this protocol is used to secure individual rooms and keep students in place and quiet;
- Evacuate – “Evacuate to the Gym” this protocol is used to move students from one location to another in or out of the building; and
- Shelter – “Shelter for the Tornado” this protocol is to group and self-protect.¹⁷

These protocols enable rapid and predictable responses in response to unforeseen events.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a standard response protocol and curriculum for lock downs.

There are foundations that can be located on the Internet that offer K-12 schools with SRP practices, guidance, training, and materials (i.e., teacher guidance sheets, parent handouts, teacher training PowerPoints, and school posters) at no cost to the district (**Exhibit 4-28**).¹⁸ This program offers standardization allowing all stakeholders to understand the protocols in response to an event.

¹⁷ <https://iloveguys.org/srp.html>

¹⁸ <https://iloveguys.org/index.html#home>

**Exhibit 4-28
Student and Parent SRP Handout**



STUDENT SAFETY
A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the classroom response to an incident at school. Weather events, fire, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by students, teachers, staff and administration.

SRP
Our school is expanding the safety program to include the Standard Response Protocol (SRP). The SRP is based on these four actions. Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. In the event of an emergency, the action and appropriate direction will be called on the PA.

LOCKOUT - "Secure the Perimeter"
LOCKDOWN - "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"
EVACUATE - "To the Announced Location"
SHELTER - "For a Hazard Using a Safety Strategy"

TRAINING
Please take a moment to review these actions. Students and staff will be trained and the school will drill these actions over the course of the school year. More information can be found at <http://iloveguys.org>

LOCKOUT
GET INSIDE. LOCK OUTSIDE DOORS
Lockout is called when there is a threat or hazard outside of the school building.

STUDENTS:

- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

TEACHERS

- Recover students and staff from outside building
- Increased situational awareness
- Do business as usual
- Take roll, account for students

LOCKDOWN
LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SIGHT
Lockdown is called when there is a threat or hazard inside the school building.

STUDENTS:

- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence

TEACHERS:

- Lock classroom door
- Lights out
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Wait for First Responders to open door
- Take roll, account for students

EVACUATE TO A LOCATION
Evacuate is called to move students and staff from one location to another.

STUDENTS:

- Bring your phone
- Leave your stuff behind
- Form a single file line
- Show your hands
- Be prepared for alternatives during response.

TEACHERS:

- Grab roll sheet if possible
- Lead students to Evacuation Location
- Take roll, account for students

SHELTER FOR A HAZARD USING SAFETY STRATEGY
Shelter is called when the need for personal protection is necessary.

SAMPLE HAZARDS:

- Tornado
- Hazmat

SAMPLE SAFETY STRATEGIES:

- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room

STUDENTS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies

TEACHERS:

- Appropriate hazards and safety strategies
- Take roll, account for students

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Source: <https://iloveguys.org/srp.html>

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-11

There are a number of safety issues that have not been addressed in the district. During the site visit, the consulting team reviewed the district facilities for life safety and general safety problems.

The consulting team observed many unmanned and unlocked doors into multiple areas of the district that were unlocked and unobserved. The district employs some camera systems however they do not prevent entry into the buildings.

Exhibit 4-29 provides multiple instances of safety issues observed by the consulting team. These deficiencies include many blocked electrical panels, extinguisher, fire door, fire panel, broken exit sign, and expired items in the science room such as an eye wash bottle, ammonia inhalant, extinguisher and an AED adult pad.

**Exhibit 4-29
Observed Safety Deficiencies**

Electrical panels and Extinguisher Blocked



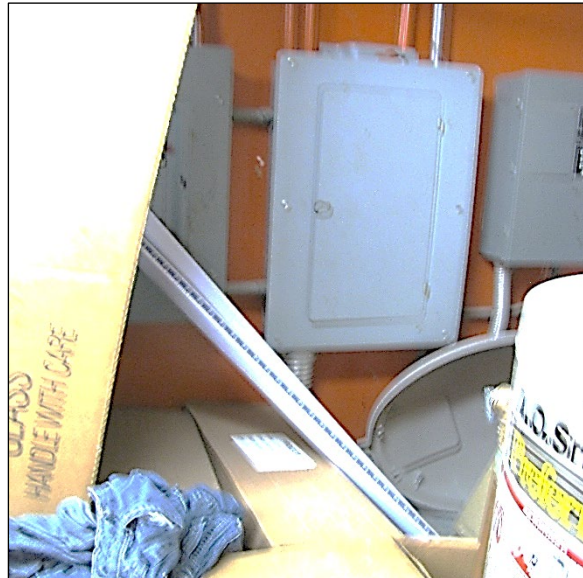
Fire Door Blocked and Broken Exit Sign



Blocked Fire Panel



Blocked Electrical Panels



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

**Exhibit 4-29 (continued)
Observed Safety Deficiencies**

Expired Eye Wash Bottle in Science Room Medical Kit



Expired Ammonia Inhalant in Science Room Medical Kit



Expired Inspection on Extinguisher



Expired AED Adult Pad



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct an inspection of all facilities removing items that are blocking fire alarm panels, electrical boxes and emergency exit doors, or correct the deficiencies, and contact the Oklahoma School Security Institute for a free security assessment.

The maintenance and custodial staff should inspect all mechanical and electrical closets. They should document all safety deficiencies, develop a prioritized work list, and correct the safety deficiencies by removing items that are stored blocking fire panels, electrical panels, and mechanical equipment.

The consulting team recommends that the district contact the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security and request a school safety and security assessment of the district. This will assess both the physical plant as well the district safety plan and emergency preparedness.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 4-12

There is no formally designated safety manager in the district who is responsible for conducting general safety or life safety inspections of all district facilities on an ongoing basis, or ensuring deficiencies noted are properly reported and repaired. As discussed previously, BCPS has a number of safety and security problems.

The district has not designated anyone to ensure that life safety equipment such as fire doors, fire and smoke boundaries, exit lights, emergency egress lights, and fire extinguishers are tested and inspected in accordance with national and international codes adopted by the state of Oklahoma. Nor does the district have a person to conduct general safety and life safety inspections of all district facilities on an ongoing basis or ensuring that deficiencies are properly reported in a maintenance work order system with follow-up as appropriate.

Section 1447 of the School Laws of Oklahoma, 2017¹⁹ requires that every employer having 25 or more full-or part-time employees shall designate an employee who shall coordinate all safety programs of the employer. Additionally, that employee must receive training during the school year.

RECOMMENDATION

Designate a safety manager for the district who is responsible for establishing safety programs and procedures in the district.

One person should be designated as safety program manager for the district. This position based upon the size of the district should be able to provide the inspections concerning OSHA, life safety, and general building inspections necessary to implement and coordinate a comprehensive district safety program.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

¹⁹ https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/2017%20School%20Law%20Book_0.pdf

FINDING 4-13

No Safety Data Sheets (SDS) were available in the custodial closets. The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, 29 CFR 1910.1200, paragraph(g)(8) states that “the employer shall maintain in the workplace copies of the required safety data sheets for each hazardous chemical, and shall ensure that they are readily accessible during each work shift to employees when they are in their work area(s).”

The lack of SDS in the work area leaves the persons using the chemicals without knowledge of how to treat an exposure to the chemical. This may leave the district vulnerable in case of an exposure.

RECOMMENDATION**Provide SDS information at the point of use for chemicals and cleaning supplies.**

The district should also provide training on the safety of cleaning products to prevent accidental or intentional misuse or abuse. A well-trained and informed workforce is not only more productive but is also safer. Material safety data sheets provide safety information that can be useful in saving lives in the event of chemical ingestion or inhalation.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

Chapter 5:
Support Services

Chapter 5

Support Services

This chapter reviews several areas of support services in Boise City Public Schools (BCPS). It is divided into these sections:

- A. Child Nutrition
- B. Technology
- C. Transportation

A. CHILD NUTRITION

Successful administration of the child nutrition program depends upon consistent program organization, strong financial reporting, and precise personnel management. All of these administrative areas must align and support the district's goals for student achievement.

School meal programs began in 1946, when the *National School Lunch Act* was signed, authorizing the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to “safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children.” The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is open to all public and nonprofit private schools, as well as all residential childcare institutions. The NSLP also offers after-school snacks for sites that meet the eligibility requirements.

The *Child Nutrition Act of 1966* established the School Breakfast Program (SBP). This is a federally-assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free breakfasts to children in public schools, nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions.

BCPS participates in the NSLP, the SBP, and the USDA Foods in Schools Program. Districts that participate in these federal programs receive cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each eligible meal they serve. In return, the district must serve student meals that meet federal guidelines for nutritional value, offer free or reduced price meals to eligible students, and accurately keep required records.

Students in the lowest socioeconomic bracket qualify for free lunches, while others qualify for reduced price lunches. Meals served according to federal guidelines receive some level of reimbursement, including those served to students who pay full price. School districts do not receive federal reimbursement support for teacher or guest meals. **Exhibit 5-1** shows the applicable 2017-18 and 2018-19 federal reimbursement rates for breakfast and lunch. BCPS also receives an additional six cents per meal for meeting the updated meal pattern requirements.

Exhibit 5-1
School Meals: Federal per Meal Reimbursement Rates
2017-18 and 2018-19

Meal Type	School Breakfast Program - Severe Need ¹		National School Lunch Program (with 6 cents)	
	2017-18	2018-19	2017-18	2018-19
Free	\$2.09	\$2.14	\$3.29	\$3.37
Reduced Price	\$1.79	\$1.84	\$2.89	\$2.97
Paid	\$0.30	\$0.31	\$0.37	\$0.37

Source: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/rates-reimbursement>

The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA)* provided sweeping modifications to the school nutrition programs and made significant changes in the required meal components. The new regulations require districts to charge equitable prices for full-pay meals and non-reimbursable à la carte items, establish nutritional requirements for all foods sold on campuses at any time during the school day, provide free water where meals are served, provide nutrition education to students in the district, and require school nutrition directors/managers to meet education, training, and certification requirements.

Exhibit 5-2 provides the nutritional requirements as specified in *HHFKA* and the Final Rule. Both the breakfast and lunch menus now must offer more fruits and vegetables than before. Milk must be low-fat or fat-free. Sodium levels must be reduced. Whole grains must be increased and trans fats must be eliminated. In the last few years, while many districts have successfully implemented the requirements of *HHFKA*, there have been discussions at the federal level about rolling back some provisions and delaying the implementation of others. Those discussions concluded in December 2018, with the announcement by the USDA of the Final Rule on School Meal Flexibilities.

¹ BCPS is eligible to receive severe need reimbursements for breakfasts served to eligible students on sites where 40 percent or more of the lunches claimed at the site in the second preceding school year were served free or at a reduced price, and the site is participating in or initiating a school breakfast program.

Exhibit 5-2
Summary of Nutritional Requirements for Breakfast and Lunch

	Breakfast		Lunch	
Fruit and Vegetables	1 cup per day (vegetable substitution allowed). Students are allowed to select ½ cup under Offer Versus Serve.		¾-1 cup vegetables plus ½-1 cup fruit per day.	
Grains	Daily minimum of 1 ounce equivalent minimum per day; weekly minimum ranges, varying by grade: K-5: 7-10 ounces 6-8: 8-10 ounces 9-12: 9-10 ounces		Daily minimums varying by grade: K-5: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (8-9 oz. weekly) 6-8: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (8-10 oz. weekly) 9-12: 2 oz. eq. min. daily (10-12 oz. weekly)	
Meat/Meat Alternate	May substitute meat/meat alternates after minimum daily requirement for grains is met.		K-5: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (8-10 oz. weekly) 6-8: 1 oz. eq. min. daily (9-10 oz. weekly) 9-12: 2 oz. eq. min. daily (10-12 oz. weekly)	
Whole Grains	At least half of weekly grains must be whole grain rich.		At least half of weekly grains must be whole grain rich.	
Milk	1 cup, 1% (unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored/flavored)		1 cup, 1% (unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored/flavored)	
Sodium*	Target 1 (2019-24): K-5: ≤ 540 mg 6-8: ≤ 600 mg 9-12: ≤ 640 mg	Target 2 (2024-25): K-5: ≤ 485 mg 6-8: ≤ 535 mg 9-12: ≤ 570 mg	Target 1 (2019-24): K-5: ≤ 1230 mg 6-8: ≤ 1360 mg 9-12: ≤ 1420 mg	Target 2 (2024-25): K-5: ≤ 935 mg 6-8: ≤ 1035 mg 9-12: ≤ 1080 mg
Trans Fat	Zero grams per serving (nutrition label)		Zero grams per serving (nutrition label)	

Source: USDA, December 2018

Exhibit 5-3 provides photos of a sampling of BCPS trays selected by students during the onsite period. Trays for breakfast and lunch are shown.

Exhibit 5-3
Sample of BCPS Breakfast and Lunch Trays



Source: Prismatic, January 2019

Exhibit 5-4 shows the current child nutrition organizational structure for BCPS. As shown, the district employs a cafeteria manager and two kitchen staff.

Exhibit 5-4
BCPS Child Nutrition Organizational Structure



Source: Created by Prismatic, February 2019

FINDING 5-1

The district's open campus policy for high school students has a negative financial impact on the child nutrition program. Moreover, it provides students with unsupervised time during the school day.

The superintendent stated an open campus policy for the high school students has been a longtime practice. Prior to the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, only à la carte items were available for purchase in the high school building. The district started offering lunch service at the high school building in the 2017-18 school year when the junior high students moved into the high school building. The practice of an open campus for high school students continued even though they now had lunch service available to them in their building. Approximately 23 high school students eat lunch a day.

Off the Map: Extracurricular School Food Open Campus Lunch published by the Public Health Advocacy Institute² addresses open campus policies in schools. They state that open and closed campus policies have the potential to affect students' health, safety, and security, as well as to influence the school environment itself. They note that the 2006 School Health Policies and Programs Study showed that nationwide 71.1 percent of high school districts have a closed campus policy. The nationwide trend is moving toward more closed campuses as in 2000 there were 65.9 percent nationwide. They describe the school environment as an important sphere in the development of dietary behavior and recommend policymakers to craft school food laws that

² <https://www.phaionline.org/2009/04/06/off-the-map-extracurricular-school-food/>

encourage healthier options while restricting unhealthier options. They state student input and support are critical to the success of a closed school policy.

RECOMMENDATION

Discontinue the open campus policy for all high school students.

The district should form a task force comprised of administrators, parents, and high school students to develop strategies around elimination of the open campus policy. The change should be executed with a phased in approach. In year one, school year, 2019-20, it should be open only to seniors. In year two it should be closed for all grades.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-2

The district is allowing an indirect violation of USDA policy on a regular basis. Once a month, students are allowed to purchase a lunch at the nearby church in competition with the school lunch program.

The district encourages participation in this event by providing transportation for junior high school students as observed by the consulting team. Other students were observed walking or driving to the church. As can be expected, meal participation is impacted. The day before the event in January 2019, 243 lunches were served. On the day of the church event 175 lunches were served in the cafeteria, a 28 percent decrease. This event is held once a month on the second Tuesday of each month. The cafeteria manager stated there are times when the day changes and she is not always notified, resulting in overproduction and wasted food.

USDA Federal code 7 *CFR 210.11* addresses competitive food sales. Competitive food is defined as all food and beverages other than meals reimbursed under programs authorized by the *Richard B. Russel National School Lunch Act* and the *Child Nutrition Act of 1966* available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day. Though the church is technically not on the school campus, the district is breaking the spirit of the law by transporting students to another food provider during the same time as lunch service.

RECOMMENDATION

Adhere to USDA policy regarding the promotion of competitive foods sources.

The district should discontinue the practice of allowing students who have an open campus at lunchtime to leave the school and purchase food at another vendor. They should work with the church to develop alternative fundraising events involving students that do not impact participation in the school lunch program.

FISCAL IMPACT

The district receives three forms of reimbursement for every lunch served. Meal reimbursement (\$3.33 for free students), USDA foods (\$0.23), and a state performance incentive (\$0.06) for a total of \$3.62 per student. There were 68 fewer students who received a lunch on the day of the event for a loss of \$246.16 ($68 \times \3.62). The church holds the event once a month so assuming the same drop in participation, the net impact is an annual increase of \$2,462 for the ten months students attend school. Adhering to USDA policy should therefore increase annual child nutrition revenues.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Discontinue USDA policy violation in competitive foods.	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462	\$2,462

FINDING 5-3

The child nutrition manager lacks training in some aspects of the federal school meals program. The manager indicated a lack of understanding of the software program used to create menus and perform nutritional analysis. She also stated a need for more training with inventory tracking.

The cafeteria manager was promoted to her position at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. Prior to that she had been a part-time kitchen employee for two weeks. She had no prior experience in the school meals program. She was not mentored or trained by the person she replaced. She did receive some basic training from the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) child nutrition consultant assigned to the Boise City region. She also had to assume the duty of processing meal applications this year after the sudden departure of another staff person assigned to this task.

The consulting team observed the cafeteria manager performing several meal production and cleaning duties during the time when she should have been completing her daily bookwork. The other two kitchen staff could have completed the meal production and cleaning tasks. Then, the manager could have been able to perform the required bookwork after the breakfast service, and the required bookwork after the lunch service, instead of doing these tasks at the end of the workday. Additionally, the manager could have more time for menu planning, meal applications, and any other assigned duties. This change could provide more time for the manager to learn more about her role as manager.

NutriKids is the software program used by the district for menu making and nutritional analysis. The manager showed the consulting team the user guides regarding this software program. She stated she is not trained on this program and has not found the time to learn the software. She would like to learn how to input recipes, new food items, and perform a nutritional analysis on the menus. The manager also stated another area she is not trained on and needs help is inventory tracking, which is not an automated process. She would also like to learn about how to track food costs. The manager indicated that she is interested in learning, and desires to go to training over the summer months.

The administrative review (AR) performed by the SDE in February 2018, noted violations in the application processing area, which is a task the current manager was not performing. Other violations were found in the purchasing area, which is a task performed by another district employee. The noncompliance areas under the manager's purview were the production records and the development of a food safety training plan; these were noted as minimal. Both of these areas were corrected, and the AR was closed in April.

The school meals program is complex, not static, and is governed by local, state, and federal rules and regulations that also undergo frequent changes. For these reasons it is a difficult program to learn and requires continual updates in training. In recognition of the need for continuing education, building skills, and empowering staff, the USDA instituted Professional Standards requirements.

The purpose of the Professional Standards provision of *HHFKA* is to establish minimum continuing education standards for all school nutrition professionals. These training standards help ensure that child nutrition personnel have the knowledge, training, and tools they need to plan, prepare, and serve nutritious meals to students.

Exhibit 5-5 outlines the minimum training hours required for each employee group. The training must be job-specific, apply to the employee's work duties, and assist them in optimal performance of their assigned job duties.

Exhibit 5-5
Professional Standards Annual Training Hours Required

CN Position	2015-16	2016-17
Directors	8 hours	12 hours
Managers	6 hours	10 hours
Staff	4 hours	6 hours
Staff (less than 20 hours)	4 hours	4 hours

Source: USDA, January 2012

In addition to USDA requirements for training, The School Nutrition Association (SNA) in their *Keys to Excellence: Standards of Practice for Nutrition Integrity*³ recommend the following as a best practice: "Orientation and training that enhances learning and improves job skills is available to all school nutrition personnel."

RECOMMENDATION

Obtain training for the child nutrition manager on a variety of topics regarding the school meals program.

The Oklahoma SDE child nutrition consultant for the BCPS region should be contacted on any area the manager does not feel proficient with. Their technical assistance and training is free and their goal is to assist child nutrition personnel in running a more efficient and effective program.

³ <https://schoolnutrition.org/learning-center/usda-professional-standards/keys-to-excellence/>

The manager should join the Oklahoma School Nutrition Association (SNA) and attend the trainings and conferences they provide. The summer conference would be especially helpful as it contains an exhibit hall with food and equipment vendors. The manager should become familiar with the many online training opportunities provided at no cost by the Institute for Child Nutrition (ICN)⁴. These can be used to upgrade her skills as a manager and also meet the Professional Standards requirements for the other kitchen staff. Another useful training tool is to visit child nutrition programs in other school districts to get ideas for menu items, equipment, and different types of meal service. Finally, the district should hire a BCPS student proficient in technology to learn about the NutriKids program, input data, perform a nutritional analysis of the menus and teach the manager how to perform these tasks. This process should be completed by the end of summer 2019 so new menus can be developed that meet the nutritional analysis requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-4

The financial status of the child nutrition program is problematic. The program operated at a loss and required general fund assistance for the past three years to cover expenses. This has reduced the amount of general funding available for other district programs, including instruction. The child nutrition manager does not receive any financial reports and is therefore not knowledgeable about the financial aspects of the program.

There is no separate child nutrition fund. All revenue and expenditures are put in the general fund. The financial secretary stated this is done because usually the program operates at a loss and requires support from the general fund. This procedure was implemented to simplify the process, eliminating transfers from one fund to another. **Exhibit 5-6** shows the BCPS child nutrition program revenues and expenditures over time. Data were extrapolated from the general fund account. As shown over the last three years, the child nutrition program's revenues increased, expenditures decreased, and the annual loss decreased each year. Nevertheless, the program finished 2017-18 with a substantial financial loss.

⁴ <https://theicn.org/>

Exhibit 5-6
BCPS Child Nutrition Revenues and Expenditures

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Revenues			
Return of Assets (Local Sources)	\$13,323	\$20,089	\$34,034
State Reimbursement	\$1,359	\$1,217	\$1,169
Federal Reimbursement	\$81,409	\$93,782	\$92,701
Total Revenues	\$96,091	\$115,088	\$127,904
Expenses			
Salaries and Benefits	\$103,504	\$97,665	\$101,145
Food and Supplies	\$92,701	\$87,677	\$82,113
Other Expenses	\$9,075	\$3,312	\$5,081
Total Expenses	\$205,280	\$188,654	\$188,339
Revenue - Expenses	(\$109,189)	(\$73,566)	(\$60,435)

Source: SDE, School District Revenue and Expenditure Reports 2015-18

Note: Totals may not reconcile completely due to rounding

There are no financial reports prepared for the child nutrition program. Revenue and expenditure data are available that could be used to prepare a monthly site level report. Participation and sales data are available from the automated POS (point of service). This data are tabulated by the financial secretary to prepare the claim for reimbursement. Orders are placed with vendors who provide an invoice upon delivery. These invoices are given to the financial secretary where they are tabulated and prepared for payment. These invoices could be used to determine food and supplies costs. Staff are paid on a contract basis so labor costs and benefits are readily available.

The lack of data has resulted in no regular assessment being performed. Decisions are made regarding menus, purchasing food and supply items, salaries, and assigning labor hours with no knowledge of how these costs are impacting the overall financial health of the program. As long as the district has sufficient funds to support the program there is no effort made to determine if improvements could be made for greater effectiveness. The manager has not been taught how to determine if revenue is sufficient to cover the costs expended.

Standard business practice dictates the development of a well-defined set of reports that can be used for data analysis and program improvement. *School Food & Nutrition Service Management for the 21st Century*, sixth edition, states the following regarding school food service programs operating as an enterprise system:

The school food and nutrition service fund is one of the most challenging school district accounts to manage because of the many variables. A good accounting system is essential. It should follow generally accepted governmental accounting principles. The school food and nutrition service fund is an enterprise fund. An “enterprise fund” generates its own income and is different from a “budgetary fund.” The program fund parallels an enterprise account in that it produces goods, provides services, and charges for those goods and services.

Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence, second edition, edited by Josephine Martin and Charlotte Beckett Oakley, states, “One of the most important aspects of financial management involves the preparation of financial statements that can be used to analyze program operations.”

School meal programs are unique in a school district because they have both revenue and expenditure accounts. If the programs do not operate with fiscal soundness, they are dependent upon the general fund for subsidization. The only way to ensure a fiscally solvent program is to prepare reports and then use this information for making decisions.

ICN recommends preparing and distributing site-level performance reports in their class *Financial Management: A Course for School Nutrition Directors*.⁵ SNA’s self-assessment tool, *Keys to Excellence*, includes the following best practices and indicators:

- A Statement of Revenue and Expenditures (Profit and Loss Statement) is prepared on a monthly basis for the department level and for each serving site.
- School nutrition site-level Statement of Revenue and Expenditures are distributed.
- School nutrition personnel at the school site level receive training on controlling costs and revenue generation.
- School nutrition personnel at the school site level are encouraged to develop and implement practices to increase revenue and control costs.⁶

One cafeteria-level report distributed by another school district is shown in **Exhibit 5-7**. This sample provides a variety of data, including financial and performance data, in a format that is easy to read and understand. Additional sample reports can be found in the NFSMI financial management class materials.

⁵ <https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/financial-management-a-course-for-school-nutrition-directors/>

⁶ <https://schoolnutrition.org/learning-center/usda-professional-standards/keys-to-excellence/>

**Exhibit 5-7
Sample Monthly Cafeteria Report**

Revenue:		Current Month	Year to Date
Meal Revenue		\$2,411.40	
Supplemental Sales		\$1,648.90	
Other Revenue		\$75.34	
Total Reimbursement		\$15,061.75	
TOTAL REVENUE:		\$19,197.39	\$139,903.44

Expenses:		Current Month	Year to Date
<i>Inventory/Food Cost</i>			
Beginning Inventory		\$5,973.00	
Purchases		\$7,167.00	
Transfers		(\$70.00)	
Ending Inventory		\$5,932.00	
<i>Total Food Usage:</i>		\$7,138.00	\$51,686.00
<i>Inventory/Supply Cost</i>			
Beginning Inventory		\$1,413.00	
Purchases		\$753.00	
Transfers		\$311.00	
Ending Inventory		\$1,564.00	
<i>Total Supply Usage:</i>		\$913.00	\$6,618.00
Labor Costs			
School Staff		\$8,186.19	
Temporary Labor		\$0.00	
<i>Total Labor:</i>		\$8,186.19	\$67,638.24
Overhead		(\$108.37)	\$6,207.11
TOTAL EXPENSES:		\$16,128.82	\$132,149.35
GAIN or (LOSS):		\$3,068.57	\$7,754.09
% GAIN or (LOSS):		15.98%	5.54%

Supervisor Comments/Suggestions:

Percent of Revenue			
	Total Cost	% of Total Revenue	Goal Less Than
Food	\$7,138.00	37.18%	40%
Supplies	\$913.00	4.76%	5%
Labor	\$8,186.19	42.64%	40%
Overhead	(\$108.37)	-0.56%	7%
Total Cost	\$16,128.82	84.02%	92%

Total Meal Equivalents Per Day	
Total Breakfasts:	56
Total Lunches:	264
Supplemental Sales:	36
Total Meal Equivalents:	357

% of Eligible Meals Served			
Average Daily Attendance:		426	
	# Eligible	% Served	Goal
Free	223	85.67%	
Reduced	14	88.72%	
Paid	219	26.56%	

Current Month Plate Cost			
	Total School Cost	Cost Per ME	Goal
Food	\$7,138.00	\$1.05	\$1.08
Supplies	\$913.00	\$0.13	\$.13
Labor	\$8,186.19	\$1.38	\$1.08
Overhead	(\$108.37)	(\$0.02)	\$.19
Total Cost	\$16,128.82	\$2.55	\$2.48

YTD Plate Cost			
	Total School Cost	Cost Per ME	Goal
Food	\$51,686.00	\$1.05	\$1.08
Supplies	\$6,618.00	\$0.13	\$.13
Labor	\$67,638.24	\$1.37	\$1.08
Overhead	\$6,207.11	\$0.12	\$.19
Total Cost	\$132,149.35	\$2.67	\$2.48

Source: Prismatic files, December 2013

RECOMMENDATION

Implement changes that will result in a more cost-effective food service program; at the same time, provide financial reports and training to the child nutrition manager.

There are several other findings in this chapter that if implemented will result in a more positive overall financial picture for the child nutrition program. Closing the school campus to all students, starting an à la carte program at the secondary level, discontinuing the practice of allowing students to purchase a meal at the church, implementing a fruit and vegetable bar to attract high school students, and serving breakfast at the high school will all result in increased revenue. Implementing a pre-portion self-serve fruit and vegetable option by adapting the serving line at the elementary school will reduce food costs. Preparing financial reports and training the manager on how to analyze them will serve as an incentive to reduce per meal costs and improve the overall financial status of the program.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-5

The child nutrition program is not adequately managing its staff. The current Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH) is below industry standards when all labor hours for the preparation and service of meals are included. In addition to labor hours for child nutrition staff (24) one hour of daily cashier duties at lunch are provided by the elementary secretary. The child nutrition manager does not calculate MPLH and therefore does not know the MPLH for the school meals program.

The district is not using the SDE recommended staffing guidelines to set goals for productivity relative to meals served. SDE guidelines provide productivity goals based upon the number of meal equivalents served and the number of labor hours needed to prepare those meal equivalents. The student reimbursable lunch meal is the standard unit of conversion for determining meal equivalents. Therefore, all meal types are converted to meal equivalents for the purposes of measurement. A meal equivalent is not a unit of production, but a calculation that allows a child nutrition manager to equate all meals to a standard. By converting all food sales to meal equivalents, a manager can determine production rates. The SDE uses the following conversions to meal equivalents:

- one lunch equates to one meal equivalent;
- two breakfasts equate to one meal equivalent;
- three snacks equate to one meal equivalent; and
- à la carte sales of \$3.56 equate to one meal equivalent.

The most common means of measuring employee productivity in child nutrition is the MPLH measure. This is calculated by dividing the number of meal equivalents produced and served in a day by the number of labor hours required to produce those meals. The SDE guidelines for MPLH staffing are shown in **Exhibit 5-8**. The SDE provides MPLH guidelines for both conventional and convenience systems of food preparation. The consulting team found BCPS menus to be a mix of conventional and convenience food preparation. Therefore, their

productivity in labor hours should be at the low end of the recommended total hours for the conventional system.

Exhibit 5-8
Oklahoma Staffing Guidelines for Onsite Production

Number of Daily Meal Equivalents	Recommended for Conventional Systems ⁷		Recommended for Convenience Systems ⁸	
	Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH)	Total Hours	Meals per Labor Hour (MPLH)	Total Hours
10 – 100	12	< 8	16	< 6
101 – 150	12	8 – 12	16	6 – 9
151 – 200	12	12 – 16	16	9 – 12
201 – 250	14	14 – 17	17	12 – 14
251 – 300	14	17 – 21	18	14 – 16
301 – 400	15	20 – 26	18	17 – 21
401 – 500	16	25 – 31	19	21 – 25
501 – 600	17	29 – 35	20	25 – 30
601 – 700	18	33 – 37	22	27 – 31

Source: OK SDE Child Nutrition Manual Compliance Section, July 2018

Exhibit 5-9 shows the 2017-18 monthly MPLH for the BCPS cafeteria. Productivity (MPLH) was lower than the recommended standards, and labor hours were in excess of SDE recommendations by eight hours per day.

⁷ A system where meals are generally prepared from scratch onsite.

⁸ A system where meals are generally only re-heated from frozen prepared items onsite.

Exhibit 5-9
Boise City Cafeteria Meals per Labor Hour
2017-18

Month	Lunches Served	Breakfasts Served	Meal Equivalents	School Days	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Labor Hours	MPLH
August	2,248	1,052	2,942	11	267	25	10.7
September	3,983	1,945	5,267	20	263	25	10.5
October	3,876	1,778	5,049	19	266	25	10.6
November	4,172	1,803	5,066	19	267	25	10.7
December	2,074	1,016	2,745	11	250	25	10.0
January	4,328	2,023	5,663	20	283	25	11.3
February	3,901	1,768	5,068	18	282	25	11.3
March	2,986	1,391	3,904	14	279	25	11.2
April	3,961	1,847	5,180	19	273	25	10.9
May	1,158	549	1,520	6	253	25	10.1
Total	32,687	15,172	42,404	157	268	25	10.7

Source: BCPS and Prismatic calculations, January 2019

Exhibit 5-10 shows the 2018-19 monthly MPLH for the BCPS cafeteria. Productivity (MPLH) improved from 2017-18 due to increased district enrollment and the start of the lunch service, in place of just à la carte, to high school students. However, it could be further improved as it was lower than the recommended standards by approximately five hours per day.

Exhibit 5-10
Macomb Cafeteria Meals per Labor Hour
2018-19

Month	Lunches Served	Breakfasts Served	Meal Equivalents	School Days	Daily Meal Equiv.	Daily Labor Hours	MPLH
August	2,765	1,244	3,586	12	299	25	12.0
September	4,430	2,137	5,840	19	307	25	12.3
October	4,712	2,101	6,099	20	305	25	12.2
November	4,513	1,909	5,773	18	321	25	12.8
December	3,075	1,456	4,036	14	288	25	11.5
Total	19,495	8,847	25,334	83	304	25	12.2

Source: BCPS and Prismatic calculations, January 2019

Costs for labor and benefits are a major expenditure for child nutrition programs. To maintain a sound financial position, goals for staffing must be established based upon industry standards. SDE has established guidelines for districts to calculate meal equivalents and assign labor hours. MPLH must be calculated and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that the kitchen has adequate labor hours but is not overstaffed.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a combination of a reduction in labor hours and efforts to increase meal equivalents to yield higher productivity rates.

There are two ways to increase the productivity rate and produce more meals per hour of paid labor:

- decrease the number of labor hours – the number of staff in the school could be reduced or the number of staff hours worked daily can be reduced by adjusting work schedules; and
- increase the number of meal equivalents – implement measures to increase participation and à la carte sales. Unless the child nutrition program is feeding all of the students, faculty, and staff every day, there are possibilities for increasing participation. Every student who is enrolled and every adult who is employed by the school is a potential customer.

BCPS should implement a combination of decreasing labor hours and efforts to increase meal equivalents. Since an à la carte program is not available to the junior high and high school students, offering à la carte offerings will help increase meal equivalents. Closing campus for all grade levels, as recommended in **Finding 5-1** will serve to increase participation levels. The use of the elementary secretary as a cashier at lunch service should be eliminated. This will reduce labor by one hour. These actions combined will serve to improve productivity levels in the meals program.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The secretary is not paid out of child nutrition funds for the one hour she works as a cashier so labor costs for the child nutrition program will not be reduced by eliminating this position.

FINDING 5-6

Boise City Public Schools has an approval rate for free and reduced that is higher than the peer district average and the state average. In BCPS, 76.9 percent of students are approved for free and reduced meals, compared to the state average of 61.3 percent. The approval rate is higher than all but one peer district, as shown in **Exhibit 5-11**.

Exhibit 5-11
BCPS and Peer District Approval Rates 2018

Entity	Approval %
Boise City	76.9%
Buffalo	65.2%
Sentinel	67.6%
Smithville	82.2%
Tipton	72.1%
Turpin	65.1%
Peer Average	71.5%
State Average	61.3%

Source: OEQA District Socioeconomic Data, 2018

BCPS has a thorough procedure for processing the free and reduced price meals. Applications are available at all schools in the main office and are prominently displayed. They are provided at back-to-school nights at the beginning of the school year. The district has an effective communication process with parents to ensure all eligible families are applying.

COMMENDATION

BCPS has developed a thorough process for approving applications for free and reduced meals, resulting in an approval rate that is higher than both the state and peer district average.

FINDING 5-7

Student meal participation rates could be improved. Breakfast rates at the secondary level are extremely low. Lunch rates at the high school are also low.

Breakfast is served at the elementary school but not at the high school. Those secondary students who wish to receive a breakfast must come to the elementary school. There is approximately one junior high student per day and one high school student per day who receives breakfast. There are no choices of items available at breakfast. There is no self-serve. The menu is repetitive and lacks variety. There is no choice of milk flavors and on the day of observation, the consulting team observed a large number of students not taking milk. The first school year in which meal claims were split by grade level was 2018-19, allowing an analysis of participation by grade level.

Exhibit 5-12 shows breakfast participation in BCPS compared to industry standards. Data are for the time period of August through December, 2018. As shown, participation at the elementary level is higher than industry standards but extremely low at the secondary level.

Exhibit 5-12
Best Practice Breakfast Participation Rates Compared to Boise City

School	Best Practice	BCPS Rate (2018-19)
Elementary	35%	42%
Junior High	35%	≥1%
High School	25%	≥1%

Source: HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria, 2014, and BCPS, January 2019

Lunch is served at the elementary school for that grade level and at the high school building for junior high and high school students. The food is prepared at the elementary school and brought to the high school building. All students at the junior high and high school level come to the lunchroom at the same time. There is an open campus policy for high school students. At both schools there are no choices of menu items and no self-serve. The same menu is served at both the elementary school and the high school. There is a nice variety of entrée items during the month. There is no flavored milk. The manager stated she discontinued ordering it due to the product spoiling quickly. Milk is delivered only once a week. The consulting team discussed the use of shelf stable chocolate milk as an option. There are no à la carte items for sale at the high school. This practice was discontinued when lunch service began last school year.

Exhibit 5-13 shows lunch participation by grade level compared to industry standards. As shown, participation could be improved at the junior high level and is extremely low at the high school level.

Exhibit 5-13
Best Practice Lunch Participation Rates Compared to Boise City

School	Best Practice	BCPS Rate (2018-19)
Elementary	75%	74%
Junior High	75%	70%
High School	65%	29%

Source: HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria, 2014, and BCPS January 2010

Student surveys indicated that 51 percent of them *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that there is a good variety of food served and 54 percent of them *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that they like the food served (**Exhibit 5-14**). Because participation levels are high at the elementary and junior high level, it can be extrapolated that the majority of these surveys came from high school students. This survey data substantiate the need for major improvements to the meal program for high school students which should result in improved participation levels.

Exhibit 5-14
Student Survey Results on the Cafeteria

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	11%	43%	27%	14%	5%
I have enough time to eat my lunch each day.	8%	35%	11%	16%	30%
I like the food served in the cafeteria.	5%	16%	24%	22%	32%
The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	8%	24%	16%	19%	32%

Source: Prismatic Survey Results, January 2019

There are a variety of resources and training materials available to assist child nutrition programs in increasing participation. The Smarter Lunchrooms Movement at the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs has an assortment of training materials, best practices, research articles, and self-assessment forms. The SNA has a self-assessment section on menu planning and marketing in their *Keys to Excellence*. The ICN has a publication, *Best Practices for Marketing the School Nutrition Program*, as well as training courses for staff such as *Focus on the Customer*. USDA's Team Nutrition has a toolkit *Fruits and Vegetables Galore* which contains a workbook titled *Meal Appeal Attracting Customers*.

RECOMMENDATION

Implement strategies for increasing meal participation at the high school level.

BCPS should organize a high school student advisory group that meets regularly to provide input on the menus currently being used as well as taste new food items and recipes. Feedback from these meetings should be used to develop a secondary menu for lunch. Menu planning should include multiple entrée choices. An à la carte program should be started. Nutritional requirements of the *HHFKA* "Smart Snacks" must be followed when selecting items for sale.

The district should implement a self-serve fruit and vegetable bar at the high school which would contain the cold fruit and vegetable offerings instead of offering them on the line. This change in serving method would eliminate the need for the custodian to assist with lunch serving. These bars have proven to be popular with students and increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables. Naturally, SNA's 2017 Trends Report states that offering customizable menu options is the norm in 87.4 percent of school districts. The most prevalent type of customization option, found in 68.6 percent of districts, is salad/produce bars or made-to-order salads.

The district should implement a grab and go breakfast cart service in the high school and position it where the students enter the building. Items offered should be pre-wrapped and students should be allowed to eat in the classrooms. **Exhibit 5-15** and **Exhibit 5-16** show an example of a grab and go breakfast cart service and fruit and vegetable bar from other districts. Data nationwide have shown this initiative to be successful in increasing breakfast consumption especially at the secondary level.

Exhibit 5-15
Breakfast Cart at Another District



Source: Prismatic file photos

Exhibit 5-16
Fruit and Vegetable Bar at Another District



Source: Prismatic file photos

FISCAL IMPACT

The organization Salad Bars to Schools⁹ estimates the cost for one freestanding, mobile salad bar to be \$3,147. This includes everything a school needs to get started: the bar, chill pads, pans, and

⁹ <http://www.saladbars2schools.org/get-a-salad-bar/schools/>

tongs. They offer grants to help a school district purchase and start a salad bar. Another manufacturer's website shows these bars without the needed serving items to cost approximately \$1,700. A non-refrigerated cart appropriate for a breakfast grab and go program can be purchased for approximately \$450. The fiscal impact will be greatly reduced if a salad bar grant can be secured.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Purchase a salad bar and breakfast cart.	(\$3,597)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 5-8

The district is not maximizing the use of technology for the free and reduced meal application process. Parents are not able to apply on-line. Use of this technology would serve to reduce labor required to process the applications and create a more efficient process.

Meal program applications are distributed to parents at the beginning of the school year. Parents return them to the school or by USPS mail. They are processed by the cafeteria manager using the Municipal Accounting System (MAS) application processing software. Applications are not available for parents to download online and they have no opportunity to apply online. MAS does, however, have an online application available. The department does use MAS for other applications such as the point of service (POS). When asked in an interview, the principal noted the ability to apply online would be a positive change.

Parents and students have a keen understanding of technology, use it in their daily lives, and come to expect it when they participate in the school meals program. Parent surveys indicated that 57 percent of them *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they regularly use technology to keep up to date on their child's education (**Exhibit 5-17**). Putting the application on the district website for easy access and giving them the ability to apply online will be seen as a positive change and is an effective way to ensure all eligible students are enrolled in the free and reduced program. It will have the added benefit of reducing the amount of time the manager spends on the meal application process and the process should be completed more quickly.

Exhibit 5-17 Parent Survey Results on Technology

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I regularly use technology to keep up-to-date on my child's education (emailing teachers, online gradebook, etc.).	14%	43%	21%	15%	7%

Source: Prismatic Survey, January 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Implement the available component of the current software provider to automate the process of on-line meal applications.

The district should work with their automated software provider to enable parents to fill out their applications for meal benefits on-line. This should be implemented for the beginning of the 2019-20 school year. In addition, at pre-enrollment time a computer should be available in the schools for parents who would like to immediately apply online.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-9

The district purchases off the state bid for a majority of the food and supplies used in the meals program. The district also is implementing components of the farm to school program by purchasing from local suppliers of beef and pork.

The consulting team observed a food delivery into the cafeteria. The manager stated items come from two vendors. She indicated she is able to look at lists of items on the state bids to check which vendor has the best prices. The financial secretary indicated they use the state contract for purchases. State bids allow smaller districts the ability to secure better pricing than if they put out their own bids. As noted in *Power in Numbers: Group Purchasing for Healthier School Meals*¹⁰ the main benefits to a district are purchasing the best products at the lowest prices in the easiest way.

Packages of frozen pork and hamburger were observed in the freezer. These were purchased from local formers who sold their meat to the school district for use in the meals program. Sausage gravy, pork sausage biscuit, roast pork, and various items made from hamburger were on the monthly menus. This farm to school movement has shown significant success in communities and continues to experience increased adoption by school districts around the country. Benefits are seen across several areas, as noted by the National Farm to School Network:

- Kids Win – Farm to school provides all kids access to nutritious, high-quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow;
- Farmers Win – Farm to school can serve as a significant financial opportunity for farmers by opening up doors to an institutional market; and
- Communities Win – Farm to school benefits everyone from students, teachers and administrators to parents and farmers, providing opportunities to build family and community

¹⁰ https://www.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/mf82gr/13-6263_GroupPurchSM.pdf

engagement. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and strengthens the local economy.

COMMENDATION

BCPS has instituted outstanding practices for the purchases of food in the school meals program by purchasing off the state bid and purchasing meat from local farmers.

FINDING 5-10

The serving area lacks the capability to provide pre-portioned food items due to the absence of an extended sneeze guard. This deficiency prevents an efficient and effective implementation of offer versus serve and choices of food items for students. It also increases the number of staff needed to serve the various food items.

The elementary school was constructed in 1978 and at that time serving styles such as offer vs serve and pre-portioning did not exist. The serving line has a sneeze guard around the hot food wells but none around the countertop to the side (**Exhibit 5-18**). As a result, all food items must be positioned under the sneeze guard in order to comply with Department of Health regulations. Servers have to ask each student which items they want to provide an offer vs serve meal service. This is a slow and inefficient process.

There is no ability to pre-portion food items and provide choices due to the lack of a sneeze guard on the counter. Pre-portioning provides the opportunity to offer a variety of fruits and vegetables cooked and fresh. When a student makes a selection themselves from several options, they feel a sense of control and are more inclined to consume what they have selected. **Exhibit 5-19** shows examples of pre-portioned fruits and vegetables available for self-selection in another district.

Exhibit 5-18
Serving Line Space Without Sneeze Guard



Source: Prismatic, January 2019

Exhibit 5-19
Examples of Pre-Portioned Fruits and Vegetables at Another District



Source: Prismatic file photos

Keys to Excellence, SNA's self-assessment tool, includes the following best practices and indicators that relate to self-serve of pre-portioned food items:

- Service options and line architecture are designed to encourage healthy choices and minimize the time students wait to be served.

- Concepts such as self-service are used where appropriate.
- Individual portions and self-serve are planned to reduce the time it takes to serve students.¹¹

RECOMMENDATION

Install an extended sneeze guard on the serving line.

The district should install a sneeze guard on the open counter to provide an extension of the existing sneeze guard over the hot food wells. There are two options to consider. One option is to remove the existing sneeze guard over the serving area that is not being used and reinstall it on the open counter top. The other option is to purchase a free standing sneeze guard similar to the one shown in **Exhibit 5-20**. After installation staff should start portioning individual servings of a variety of vegetables and fruits and position them on trays under the sneeze guard. These changes will result in the need for fewer serving staff, freeing up the manager to staff the POS.

Exhibit 5-20
Example of a Free Standing Sneeze Guard



Source: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B001BQ6ZLU/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_t4HxCb679516K

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of removal and relocation of the existing sneeze guard cannot be determined. The cost of a 48-inch-long sneeze guard is approximately \$350.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Purchase a free standing sneeze guard.	(\$350)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

¹¹ <https://schoolnutrition.org/learning-center/usda-professional-standards/keys-to-excellence/>

B. TECHNOLOGY

Oklahoma is striving to further implement technology into all classrooms. For example, the first goal of the 2004 Oklahoma Plan for Instructional Technology/Telecommunications was that all Oklahoma students would achieve technological literacy by the eighth grade.

The Foundation for Excellence in Education's Digital Learning Council introduced the *10 Elements of High Quality Digital Learning* in the fall of 2010. These elements identify action to be taken by lawmakers and policymakers to promote a high quality education for all students. The Digital Learning 2014 State Analysis compared Oklahoma with the national average on each of the elements (**Exhibit 5-21**). Overall, Oklahoma earned a 77 percent or C+ on this report card. Oklahoma's biggest areas of concern were:

- Assessment and Accountability – non-use of evaluative outcomes-based student-performance data for virtual charter schools, online providers and online courses, and subsequent closure due to poor performance; and
- Delivery – lack of state actions to ensure broadband access and effective data use.¹²

However, Oklahoma scored high in providing student access to quality digital content.

¹² This analysis has not been updated by Digital Learning Council.

Exhibit 5-21
Digital Learning 2014 State Analysis: Oklahoma

10 Elements of High Quality Digital Learning	Oklahoma Grade & Percentage		National Average Grade & Percentage	
	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
1. Student eligibility: All students are digital learners.	D+	67%	D-	61%
2. Student access: All students have access to high-quality digital content and online courses.	A	100%	C	75%
3. Personalized learning: All students can customize their education using digital content through an approved provider.	C	75%	C+	77%
4. Advancement: Students progress based upon demonstrated competency.	B-	81%	F	59%
5. Quality content: Digital content, instructional materials, and online and blended learning courses are high quality.	A-	92%	A-	93%
6. Quality instruction: Digital instruction is high quality.	B-	82%	B-	84%
7. Quality choices: All students have access to multiple high-quality providers.	C+	79%	C-	74%
8. Assessment and accountability: Student learning is the metric for evaluating the quality of content and instruction.	F	58%	D+	68%
9. Funding: Funding creates incentives for performance, options, and innovation.	C	75%	F	54%
10. Delivery: Infrastructure: Infrastructure supports digital learning.	F	56%	D-	60%

Source: <http://www.digitalllearningnow.com/report-card/state/2014/oklahoma-3/>

Oklahoma was previously one of 22 states and one territory to create K-12 assessments aligned to Common Core State Standards through the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).¹³ A major impact of PARCC's Common Core assessments, and a concern of many Oklahoma school districts, involved technology. Oklahoma has transitioned to a new vendor, Measured Progress, for the Online Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) to assess student mastery of the Oklahoma Academic Standards rather than the Common Core Standards; however, technology remains a major component of the assessment process. The State Department of Education (SDE) has released technology guidelines¹⁴ for the Measured Progress assessments for schools so they will be properly equipped and ready to administer the tests this spring and in future retesting sessions.

¹³ <http://www.parcconline.org/>

¹⁴ https://oklahoma.onlinehelp.measuredprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/02/OSTP_Technology_Guidelines_Spring_2018_v2.pdf

Exhibit 5-22 illustrates the most current assessment technology specifications that districts in Oklahoma must consider as they administer assessments in 2018-19. Unlike specifications provided in previous years, the technology guidelines are required. In the past, there were minimum and recommended specifications. These specifications provide the levels of computer and network capacity that are required to provide a smooth testing experience for students. Bolded items are new from previous specifications.

Exhibit 5-22
Oklahoma Spring 2019 OCCT Assessment Technology Specifications

Component	Requirement
Connectivity	Must be able to connect to the Internet via wired or wireless networks
CPU	1.2 Ghz
Memory	2 GB
Screen Size	9.7" screen size or larger/"10-inch class" tablets or larger
Screen Resolution	1024 x 768
Windows Desktops/Laptops	Windows 7, 8.1, 10 32-bit, 64-bit
Mac Desktops/Laptops	10.9- 10.13
Linux Desktops/Laptops	Ubuntu 14.04.5 LTS, 16.04.3 LTS, Fedora 25, 26 (64-bit only)
Windows-Based Tablets/Netbooks 2-in-1	Windows 8.1, 10 (32-bit and 64-bit)
Apple iOS	iPad running iOS 11.2.5
Chrome OS for Chromebooks	62-64
Browsers (Used for Practice Test Only)	Internet Explorer 11 Firefox 56 or newer Chrome 64 or newer Safari 9 or newer Microsoft Edge 40.15 or newer
Input Device Requirements for All Desktops/Laptops	Keyboard – wired or wireless/Bluetooth Mouse or Touchpad
Headphone/Earphone/Ear Buds	Headphones/earphones/ear buds are required for students who have a text-to-speech accommodation

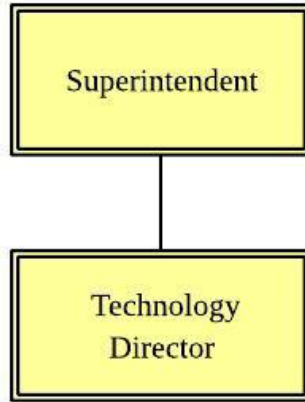
Source: https://oklahoma.onlinehelp.measuredprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/02/OSTP_Technology_Guidelines_Spring_2018_v2.pdf

The stated technology requirements further illustrate the importance of an adequate technology infrastructure and effective long-range planning to accommodate an increasing number of students participating in online testing in the coming years.

BCPS employs a full-time technology director. The district has Wi-Fi throughout the campuses. The district has SMARTBoards in place. Staff has received initial training on the SMARTBoards. BCPS has benefited from a consulting firm to acquire E-rate funding.

The current technology organizational structure for BCPS is shown in **Exhibit 5-23**. The district receives technology support from a full-time technology director.

**Exhibit 5-23
BCPS Technology Organizational Structure**



Source: Created by Prismatic, January 2019

FINDING 5-11

BCPS has a newly hired full-time technology director. BCPS demonstrates its commitment to technology by providing a technology director to serve the district’s technology needs.

The technology director refurbishes hardware, conducts needed troubleshooting and maintenance, addresses networking and access issues, conducts training sessions, updates the website, and assists in technology planning for the district. Additionally, he teaches computer classes for three hours each day.

Staff in focus groups and interviews noted the accessibility of the technology director and increased responsiveness and communication since his hiring. In staff surveys, 48 percent *agreed* and 23 percent *strongly agreed* that equipment is quickly repaired or serviced (**Exhibit 5-24**).

**Exhibit 5-24
Staff Survey Results Regarding the Repair of Technology Equipment**

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When necessary the district’s technology equipment is quickly repaired or serviced.	23%	48%	0%	26%	3%

Source: Prismatic Survey, January 2019

A 2015 nationwide survey of 173 district officials, principals, and teachers found that 71 percent believed a specific office or department should be dedicated to technology in their district. The survey also found that 62 percent of those surveyed felt that technology, specifically laptops, had helped their district better assess student learning outcomes.¹⁵

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for hiring a full-time technology director.

FINDING 5-12

The district has only one full-time staff member to support technology, supplemented by one consultant for its network. While BCPS is commended for hiring a full-time technology director, no other district staff member is trained to assist or take over duties.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), an internationally recognized nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the effective use of technology in K-12 education, developed a Technology Support Index rubric in 2008 to assist school districts in determining their needs in a variety of technology support areas. According to ISTE, “the Technology Support Index is designed to provide school districts with models for an efficient and effective technology support system based upon best practices in nationally recognized school districts.”¹⁶

In one version of the ISTE Index, four domains are assessed including equipment standards, staffing and processes, professional development, and enterprise management. School districts are ranked into one of four categories for various aspects of technology use and support. The assessment levels of efficiency are:

- low efficiency – a strategy or domain that needs attention and improvement;
- moderate efficiency – these strategies address major technical support issues but with incomplete implementation or inadequate resources;
- satisfactory efficiency – these strategies are generally effective in sustaining the technology infrastructure and promoting the integration of technology in teaching and learning; and
- high efficiency – these strategies make the most of available technology support resources, emergent problems are rapidly detected, solutions are quickly implemented, and problem sources are identified and corrected.

Exhibit 5-25 shows the ISTE Technology Support Index.

¹⁵ https://s3.amazonaws.com/dive_assets/rllpsys/State_of_EdTech_Survey_2015.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.iste.org/standards/lead-transform>

Exhibit 5-25
ISTE Technology Support Index

Index Area	Efficiency of Technology			
	Low	Moderate	Satisfactory	High
Computer to Technician Staffing Ratio (# of computers : technician)	250:1	150:1 to 250:1	75:1 to 150:1	Less than 75:1

Source: www.iste.org, 2008

An article in Edutopia Magazine, “*Technology Integration Research Review: Avoiding Pitfalls*,” points to the most common complaints teachers make about technology integration. Specifically cited was a lack of adequate support, “hardware is purchased in bulk but then left to gather dust, or software is mandated but there is no tech support to make sure it runs smoothly.”¹⁷

RECOMMENDATION

Implement a cross-training program that would ensure critical processes can be performed by multiple staff members.

Maintaining district equipment and troubleshooting assistance should be primarily handled through a technology department. However, given current budget constraints, hiring additional support staff is likely not feasible. To assist with basic troubleshooting at the sites, the district should implement a cross-training program for teacher technicians.

The district should consider a teacher technician program with staff members cross-training for password and system management and equipment repair and servicing. Having sufficient technical support is critical to successful technology use, both in classrooms and in administrative offices.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation depends on the number of teacher technicians in the program. The consulting team recommends three teacher technicians. That would allow for assignments to elementary, junior high, and high school. A \$500 stipend is recommended for the teacher technicians.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Develop a teacher technician program.	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)	(\$1,500)

FINDING 5-13

The district lacks an updated technology plan and robust planning process. The most recent Technology Plan is from 2012-15. Historically, technology planning has been completed by the

¹⁷ <https://www.edutopia.org/technology-integration-research-avoiding-pitfalls>

superintendent, principals, and former technology liaison, with little input from other stakeholders.

BCPS has not formalized a process for including multiple stakeholders on a technology committee or the development of a current technology plan. Multiple stakeholders include parents, students, community members, and businesses. Community and business partnerships could provide additional perspective in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

From the district's previous technology plan, there is no evidence of committee participation by parents or community members and currently no such committee exists. Including stakeholders such as parents, students, community members, and businesses could provide additional perspective in planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The National Center for Technology Planning recommends five phases for an effective planning model:

- **Phase 1: Recruit and organize the planning team.** It is important that the planning team consists of all stakeholder groups, and members should excel in planning and communication skills. Stakeholders may include technology specialists, district leaders, parents, students, community members, and business leaders.
- **Phase 2: Research.** This phase consists of a needs assessment and an effort to identify the technologies that can be applied to those needs and ascertain how they can be applied.
- **Phase 3: Construct the technology plan.** This phase focuses on applying the research to establish the district's vision/mission and to define the goals and objectives that will lead to fulfilling that vision and mission.
- **Phase 4: Formalize the planning.** This phase culminates into a comprehensive document that analyzes the present state of the district with respect to technology, articulates specific goals and objectives, incorporates clearly defined strategies and budgetary plans to realize the desired state of technology in the district, and includes a process for evaluation.
- **Phase 5: Continually implement, evaluate, and revise.** This phase deals with the ongoing implementation, evaluation, and revision of the plan to ensure progress is made.

The consulting team found no evidence that BCPS has updated the plan since it was written in 2012, although many goals have been achieved. Key to the planning process is conducting periodic needs assessments and structuring the plan around the results. Additionally, there are no parents, students, community members, or business leaders on a planning team. During the review, the consulting team found no evidence of a technology planning committee in place since the 2012 technology plan was developed.

RECOMMENDATION

Create a technology committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents or students to develop and update the district's technology plan.

Establishing a committee that includes staff and outside stakeholders should provide additional perspectives in planning, implementation, and evaluation of technology. Such stakeholders could include parents, students, community members, and businesses as partners. Including teacher leaders on the technology committee could also enhance opportunities for strategic planning and could increase buy-in among staff members, as well as increase understanding of what is possible.

The BCPS technology plan should be a current, comprehensive document that drives technology expenditures, implementation, and decision-making. The plan should be tied to the district strategic plan and professional development plan. The district should formalize and utilize a process for including a technology committee in technology strategic planning and the development of a long-term planning document. The superintendent should direct the technology committee to develop and periodically update a comprehensive technology plan. The plan should be achievable and based upon the current state of the district. By incorporating clearly articulated vision and mission statements, followed by specific goals, measurable objectives, adequate funding, and a detailed evaluation process, the district ensures that technology purchases and services are in line with the goals set forth in the plan and result in student achievement gains. The plan and progress should then be communicated to all stakeholders to ensure a common understanding and purpose. To facilitate effective use of technology funds, the technology committee should:

- periodically review the technology plan for accuracy and make necessary additions and deletions;
- develop hardware and software standards, and review them with all personnel;
- centralize the software purchasing process to avoid purchases that cannot be supported or will not function properly on the district's equipment;
- recommend the types of computer equipment that should be purchased and the most effective distribution of that equipment;
- develop a training program for all staff; and
- establish a policy on the purchase of extended warranties for hardware and the standardization of operating systems, antivirus, applications, and office software.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-14

BCPS lacks a process and procedure to record and track maintenance issues. The district would benefit from developing and implementing procedures for submitting and tracking technology issues and resolutions.

Currently, no formal process or procedure exists. There is no observance or follow through of a formal, documented process for addressing computer issues such as set-up, configuration, software installation, and repair. As a result, teachers, support staff, and administrators call or email the technology director to report support issues and request assistance. This lack of documentation and procedure leads to unresolved or incomplete repairs; plus, there is no supporting information available to consult when purchasing equipment or accounting for man-hours on task. This absence of processes and procedures leads to inefficiencies, additional costs, and unresolved support issues.

Time and manpower needed to provide appropriate responses to technology-based problems at BCPS are limited. Additionally, the absence of support procedures and criteria, incident requests and completion data, communication and follow-up, make the existing staff members less effective in supporting technology.

With an online work order system and written procedures, staff will be able to access it from the district network to report issues or dilemmas with technology. If fully implemented and utilized, the system could speed response times and provide a database for identifying and analyzing systemic problems.

RECOMMENDATION

Complete and implement support procedures and a technology work order system that includes features such as logging, priority assignment, and completion.

The district should implement procedures and documentation processes to track district technology issues. Detailed support data provides staff with needed information when considering new equipment purchases, retiring existing equipment, or accounting for man-hours on a task.

One solution that BCPS should consider is Zoho Desk, a cloud-based help desk ticketing software.¹⁸ Zoho Desk allows the technician to document and track technology incidents, provide work queues, reminders, and prioritization, as well as self-help troubleshooting for users. Detailed reports are available to determine the average resolution time, as well as the number of tickets opened and closed. A free version is available that allows for three technicians or agents.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-15

Despite noted deficiencies in technological proficiency among a number of teaching staff, the district lacks a staff development plan to improve technology skills. No technology integration sessions are planned or scheduled for staff.

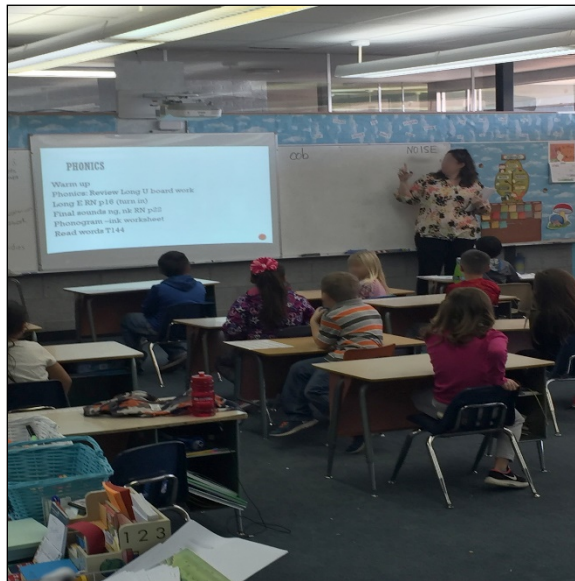
¹⁸ <https://www.zoho.com/desk/>

During focus groups and interviews, staff reported a wide range of technology skills among the teaching staff. Initial training was provided when interactive SMARTBoards were purchased but no follow-up training has been made available. Currently, staff development sessions are held at the start of school and focus on state requirements such as school security, and classroom management. Additionally, teachers related that when they request to attend sessions at other locations, administration is helpful in sending them. However, they do not always know what is available or what they need. Sessions with other districts were highlighted in focus groups as valuable for collaboration and increasing knowledge about technology initiatives.

The district's Technology Plan 2012-15 includes a budgetary section on Educator Competencies and Professional Development. A budget of \$500 for Year 1 and \$900 for Year 3 is allocated for this area. Additionally, the technology budget for E-rate lists \$1,500 for professional development.

In walkthroughs during the onsite portion of the review, the consulting team found limited examples of technology use in the regular classrooms. A few teachers were using interactive SMARTBoards to enrich instruction (**Exhibit 5-26**). Elementary computer labs were in use (**Exhibit 5-27**). Most technology was used or controlled by teachers rather than students.

Exhibit 5-26 Elementary Classroom



Source: Prismatic, January 2019

Exhibit 5-27 Elementary Computer Classroom



Source: Prismatic, January 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and implement an instructional technology plan in conjunction with the district's professional development plan.

Ongoing opportunities for professional development should be available to teachers, administrators, and support personnel at all levels. It should focus on the specific needs of individual staff and be sustained through coaching and periodic updates.

The technology committee and technology director should build upon the foundation already laid with previous training. The district should complete a needs assessment to identify areas for development. The next step is to identify minimum expectations for teacher skills in the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-16

The district lacks a disaster recovery plan. While BCPS has some backup servers in place, the district lacks a written data backup and disaster recovery plan specifically for technology.

In the event of a natural disaster or severe power surge, the district does not have procedures documented to ensure that its critical data, systems, and programs can be accessed or brought back to pre-disaster status. By failing to document a backup and recovery plan, system knowledge, recovery information, and responsibility are lost. A disaster recovery plan would aid

the district in reloading data, programs, and systems, as well as recovery of hardware and software, in the event of a disaster or loss.

While a few backup systems are in place, including backup hard drives, the district lacks the policies, procedures, and personnel assignments needed to mitigate the damage and reestablish critical data. **Exhibit 5-28** defines the process of developing an effective disaster recovery plan.

Exhibit 5-28
Key Considerations in Disaster Planning

Area	Considerations
<i>Planning for the impact of an unexpected or catastrophic event on your school</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a coordinator and/or team with defined roles for preparedness and response planning. Potential team members may include: Information Security, Operations, Systems, Police/Security, Physical Plant, Insurance, Legal Affairs, Public Affairs, Personnel Department, Comptroller, Audit Division, Safety Office, and/or Emergency Response Team. • Conduct a business process and services inventory to understand which processes are mission-critical to the school. • Determine acceptable levels of service during the recovery period, and what processes need to be maintained or restored first to keep the school running. • Identify essential employees and other critical inputs (sub-contractors, services, logistics, etc.) required to maintain business operations by location and function during the event. • Conduct a technology asset inventory to determine and document the mission-critical technology components, their location, how they're configured, and who is responsible for management. • Once key components are identified, determine what measures should be taken to protect and recover them. • Understand the rules or regulations governing your business operations. If you had a business failure, would you be able to maintain compliance? (HIPAA, FERPA, CIPA, etc.).
<i>Assessing your data and technology needs in the event of a failure in operations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the status of the existing disaster recovery plan. Do you have one and is it maintained? Have you tested the plan? • Determine vulnerability of your organization's technology infrastructure to natural disasters, including floods, fires, earthquakes, as well as flu pandemics. • Set clear recovery time objectives for each of your business/technology areas. • Determine the need for off-site data storage and backup. • Develop a technology plan that includes hardware, software, facilities, and service vendors. • Secure clear understanding and commitment from vendors on your plan. • Secure a backup vendor to perform that critical function if your primary vendor is impacted by a business failure. • Perform security risk assessments around specific threats where possible. Examples of data security include: virus protection, intrusion detection, hacker prevention, network events, component failures, and systems crashes. • Assess, if possible and per prior events, how quickly and accurately your operations were restored by existing staff. What were the lessons learned so they can be addressed in future planning? • Determine the effectiveness of your data backup and recovery policies and procedures. Are the procedures fully documented and an appropriate staff member responsible for the maintenance of that documentation? • Perform a data recovery test. Was the test successful?

Exhibit 5-28 (continued)
Key Considerations in Disaster Planning

Area	Considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an incident plan for mitigating a security breach. Audit annually, as security threats can change.
<i>Communicating your plan to employees, students and their families, and vendor partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine who needs to be contacted with critical information. Build distribution lists and maintain for accuracy. • Develop a contact plan to reach employees: wireless, home, etc. • Ensure Student Information System (SIS) data is accurate to ensure alerts can be delivered to your community. • Ensure employees know where to receive information and updates about whether they can return to work, or if they are to report to a different location (Internet, conference bridges, etc.). • Ensure mission-critical employees know their role in the plan and have access from remote locations (i.e., home broadband, phone, VPN for security). • Make sure the plan can be executed by alternate employees who are not necessarily the “expert” in cases where those employees cannot be reached. • Ensure cross-functional training is established and refreshed on a regular basis. • Determine the need for a designated recovery site for your people to resume work. Plan for communications, data connectivity, desktops, and workspace at that site. • If you require support from vendor partners, ensure they also have a documented plan that complements your needs. Review periodically to keep the plan current.
<i>Coordinating with external organizations and helping your community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other local government agencies, including first responders, to share your plans and coordinate mock emergency drills to ensure coordination in the event of an emergency. • Share best practices with business leaders in your community, chambers of commerce, and business associations to improve community response efforts.

Source: Consortium of School Networking, February 2015

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and test a disaster recovery plan that includes the district’s critical data, systems, and programs.

The district should address this problem immediately. The district should develop and test a disaster recovery plan that includes the district’s critical data, systems, and programs. The district technology director and superintendent can lead the process of developing a plan adequate to meet the needs of BCPS. The costs associated with losing vital information, services, and equipment in the event of a disaster could greatly impact the district.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-17

Although BCPS has provided Wi-Fi access throughout the district, stakeholders have noted that the Internet is slow and unreliable at times. Without fast, reliable access, teachers can be reluctant to use Internet-based resources in classroom instruction and non-teaching staff can be hampered in completing their daily duties.

Staff members indicated during focus groups and interviews a lack of reliability and speed in some areas of the buildings. Teachers reported that equipment goes unused due to a lack of consistent or slow Internet access in parts of the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Take steps to improve Internet access and reliability throughout the district.

An assessment of the current placement of wireless access points should be conducted to determine areas that are lacking connectivity. Additionally, all network servers, routers and connectivity should be tested. After the analysis, existing access points or equipment may need to be relocated or additional access points or routers purchased.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources. The district's E-rate funding includes \$20,000 for hardware and \$45,000 for maintenance.

FINDING 5-18

The district is not ensuring that it is spending dollars wisely by regularly assessing the use of technology available to students and staff. As a result, the district is not maximizing its technology use or expenditures.

The district has no structured procedures in place to assess staff, student, or parent use of, and satisfaction with, technology available in the district. There is no formal process in place for evaluating technology implementation and use. BCPS has made a number of technology investments in infrastructure, hardware, and software, and continues to invest in technology. However, by not following up after the initial purchase and set up to determine the use of technology or the problems preventing its use, the district lacks the kind of information that leads to sound decision-making and improvement.

With the onset of online assessments, web-based textbooks, and college and workplace requirements, students must be comfortable and adept at using computers, the Internet, and other technology resources. In order for students to develop and build the necessary skills and comfort level, students must have reliable, consistent access and integrated use of technology. In addition to providing access to students, it is critical that the district identify what technologies are being used, provide teachers with the tools and training to integrate those technologies into instruction, and evaluate whether or not these strategies result in student achievement gains.

RECOMMENDATION

Develop procedures to assess technology use and satisfaction with the goal of establishing higher use.

The district should frequently gauge user satisfaction and adjust, in order to ensure optimal technology service. The district should track and analyze technology use in classrooms, in order to ensure it has used its technology resources most effectively. This will also identify whether

additional supports, such as training or improved infrastructure, are needed. The district could also implement a method to assess staff, student, and community satisfaction with technology-integrated classes and instruction. This knowledge could help inform future planning in technology acquisition and implementation.

A number of survey instruments and checklists are available free of charge. Survey examples may be found at the Wufoo Form Gallery,¹⁹ including technology support surveys, website content surveys, and student satisfaction surveys. Additionally, ISTE has developed a Classroom Observation Tool that provides districts with a mechanism to record and analyze technology use in classrooms. This free tool is built in Microsoft Excel and allows district personnel to record information on classroom groupings, teacher roles, time, types of technology used, and compliance with the ISTE. Once the information is gathered, district personnel should discuss the findings with staff and make needed adjustments.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-19

The district lacks a complete inventory of its technology assets. Moreover, the district does not have a formal methods for documenting technology purchases.

The district does not maintain a current technology inventory. No documentation or estimate exists for the number of administrative computers, printers, or other technology in the district. Because BCPS does not have a systematic fixed asset inventory for technology equipment, the numbers of available and updated technology equipment cannot be easily obtained or verified.

BCPS has routinely applied asset tags to technology equipment as it is purchased and logged into the district's network. Over the last few years, as more and more devices have been acquired, records management has suffered, and some of the newer devices are not recorded in the district's inventory. Onsite interviews with technology staff indicate a desire for a manageable inventory management system to keep an accurate account of all technology.

Considering the financial allocation provided for technology in school districts, it is critical to maintain a record of all technology purchased, both software and hardware. There are four main ways an inventory management system will help protect a school district's computer network, which is a long-term investment:

- **Information theft** – A network inventory management system keeps track of not only hardware but also software. It also shows who has access to that software. A regular check of the system's inventory will reveal who has downloaded and used software they may not be authorized to use.

¹⁹ <http://www.wufoo.com/gallery/>

- **Equipment theft** – A network inventory management system will automatically detect every piece of equipment and software connected to the district’s system. Additionally, it will also illustrate which items are not working properly, which items need to be replaced, and which items have mysteriously disappeared. Workplace theft can be eliminated simply by running a regularly scheduled inventory check.
- **Licensing agreements** – An inventory of software and licensing agreements will show whether or not the district has the necessary licensing agreements for all software. Insufficient licensing can cost usage fees and fines, and duplicating software that is already available is an unnecessary expense.
- **System upgrades** – Outdated equipment and software can cost a school district time, money, and resources. Downtime and slow response times are two components of an inefficient system. Filters can be set on the network inventory management system to alert users when it is time to upgrade software or replace hardware with newer technology to keep the system running as smoothly and efficiently as possible.²⁰

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a formal inventory process and procedure for computers and other technology equipment that includes assigning new equipment and maintaining a record of all technology devices.

Procedures for developing the whole school inventory should include specific steps in regard to existing computer and other technology as well as subsequent purchases. The inventory should be periodically and systematically updated.

Items should be recorded in a digital file by serial number, tagged, and have their location and person of primary responsibility noted, as well as date of purchase. Multiple digital copies of this file should be saved and given to the superintendent and principal. Updates should be made as new purchases are received, and obsolete equipment is retired. At a minimum, an annual inventory of all equipment should be conducted.

When equipment from future purchases is delivered, it should be received by the responsible technology designee and then processed into the inventory system. Physical inventories should be taken and status reports should be generated according to the adopted board of education (BOE) policy. Having the receiving, tagging, assignment, and inventory processes standardized will prevent confusion about the count, value, age, and location of district technology assets.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

²⁰ <http://www.spiceworks.com/it-articles/inventory-management-system/>

FINDING 5-20

The district lacks an adopted replacement cycle for its technology assets. BCPS does not have a plan for replacing its current computers and related equipment. As a result, the district's computer equipment can sometimes be unreliable, slow when connecting to the Internet, and limited in software compatibility. These factors and more impact the volume and timeliness of technology support.

In staff surveys, when asked about the lifespan of district technology equipment, 72 percent *agreed* and 24 percent *strongly agreed* that equipment was operated past its usefulness (**Exhibit 5-29**). According to the Gartner Group, an independent technology research and consulting firm, the useful life of computers in public education is four to five years.

Exhibit 5-29
Staff Survey Results Regarding Lifespan of District's Technology

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The district's technology equipment is often used past its useful lifespan.	24%	72%	0%	4%	0%

Source: Prismatic Survey, January 2019

To achieve satisfactory efficiency status on the ISTE Index, equipment should be placed on a four to five-year life cycle. Some categories, such as student lab computers, may require more frequent replacement than those computers used in administrative capacities. Additionally, the ISTE Index indicates that lacking a computer replacement schedule of any kind falls into the low efficiency category. Failing to surplus equipment until it is no longer usable and continuing to service obsolete equipment, also falls in the low efficiency category.

Technology can no longer be an afterthought or add-on in today's classrooms. It must be purposely integrated into instructional strategies and practices. In order for that to happen, funding must be available to ensure that classroom technology is up-to-date and usable. Several studies, including research by the Gartner Group, report that organizations should be budgeting between four and six percent of their overall budgets for technology. There are no established best practices or standards in this area for K-12 schools.

RECOMMENDATION**Adopt and fund a regular replacement cycle for technology assets.**

Once inventory information is available, the technology director should establish a priority list of which types of computers are to be replaced first (i.e., student use, and, then, in what order others will be replaced) and with what type of device. The technology director should also establish the expected longevity and scheduled replacement for each computer category.

Once these replacement schedules have been established, the superintendent should annually link district general funds designated for computer replacement to the number of computers to be

replaced. The same process can be used for other computer-related equipment, such as printers.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of this recommendation will depend upon the inventory and replacement schedule adopted. An estimate of the number of administrative staff, clerical staff, instructional staff, and student computers in the district is 200-250. In order to implement the recommended four- to five-year replacement cycle, approximately 40-50 computers or devices per year would need to be replaced. Depending upon the type of devices purchased, equipment upgrades and replacement could vary from \$599 (\$219 for Chrome Books, \$399 for iPad Mini) to \$3,000 (for high-end laptops). The Technology Budget currently includes \$20,000 for computers and other equipment. This budgeted amount should be used as a starting point to implementing an equipment replacement cycle.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Implement an equipment replacement cycle.	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)	(\$20,000)

FINDING 5-21

BCPS contracts with a consulting firm to assist with E-rate funding requests and documentation. The district currently uses an E-rate consulting firm to assist with the annual application and associated documentation. This service helps the district ensure it is receiving the maximum funding possible and reporting expenditures properly.

As the E-rate program requires extensive documentation and adherence to rules that change annually, it is often difficult for smaller districts to receive all potential E-rate funding. For the 2018-19 school year, BCPS requested \$68,500 in E-rate funds with the help of a consulting firm. Plans for these funds include hardware, professional development, software, maintenance and retrofitting campus-wide. According to the Technology Plan 2012-15, BCPS anticipated:

- \$64,935 in E-rate funding for Year 1;
- \$66,882 for Year 2; and
- \$68,890 for Year 3.

It is challenging for a district or district employee to conduct the necessary research, gather documentation, and request specific technology-related services through the E-rate application. Also, the funding mechanism has changed recently and allows for Wi-Fi equipment, installation, and maintenance funding. Relying on a consultant ensures the district meets the changing requirements and takes advantage of the new regulations, resulting in maximum funding for the district.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for using a consulting firm to assist with E-rate funding requests and documentation.

FINDING 5-22

BCPS has successfully secured funding sources and grants to support long-range planning in technology. The district draws on a number of sources to fund technology expenditures including grants, E-rate monies, state and federal funds.

During focus groups and interviews, staff indicated that the district has received funds to support technology through successfully acquiring grant funding. In addition to E-rate funding BCPS has received:

- a \$2,500 Farmers Grow America grant from the Monsanto Fund;²¹
- a leadership grant Phase I and II from Oklahoma Educational Technology Trust (OETT);²² and
- an annual REAP grant (Rural Economic Action Plan) for \$20,000.²³

Given budget restraints in Oklahoma schools, additional funds must be identified and acquired. BCPS is currently pursuing additional funding resources including OETT grants for the 2019-20 school year.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for successfully securing funding sources and grants to support long-range planning in technology.

C. TRANSPORTATION

The primary objective of school transportation is to provide safe, timely, and efficient transportation services to students. Oklahoma's 7,600 school buses travel more than 67 million miles a year, carrying nearly 369,000 children every day.

School districts collectively operate the safest form of transportation in the country and, per the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration school buses are safer than any other form of public or private mode of transportation. Students are nearly 50 times more likely to get to and from school safely when riding school buses instead of riding in cars, and school buses are built with crash-safety features unmatched by any other type of commuter vehicle. They also help ameliorate some of the adverse environmental effects of mass automobile commute – each

²¹ <https://www.americasfarmers.com/grow-communities/>

²² <https://www.oett.org/grants/>

²³ <https://www.owrb.ok.gov/financing/grant/reapgrants.php>

school bus filled replaces 36 cars in America, saving over two billion gallons of fuel and nearly 45 billion pounds of carbon dioxide emissions each year.²⁴

The Oklahoma School Code (OSC) authorizes school districts to provide student transportation services between school and home, from school to career and technology location, and for approved extracurricular activities. The federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* requires districts to provide transportation services to students who must travel to receive special education services, if they provide regular school transportation services.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) provides some funding for regular transportation of students who live more than 1.5 miles from the assigned school. Oklahoma school districts receive a transportation supplement that is calculated based upon a per capita allowance, the district's student density, and the number of students who live more than 1.5 miles from school (considered the average daily haul or ADH). These factors are multiplied by a state funding figure of \$1.39 (transportation factor), a figure that has not been updated since 1988.

This level of funding does not begin to support all transportation expenses in a typical Oklahoma school district. In general, the state transportation supplement provides just 16 percent of the funding needed to operate a district transportation program. Thus, every dollar saved in a school district's transportation program can instead be spent in other district programs, including classroom instruction.

The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety (ODPS) requires bus drivers to obtain a specialized bus driver's license. The SDE requires bus drivers to obtain bus driver certification and training and to pass a license history review. BCPS conducts criminal background checks on all new employees and annually evaluates the motor vehicle records of the personnel who drive school vehicles. New bus drivers also must pass an alcohol and drug test for pre-employment and submit to random drug tests that are administered throughout the year, as defined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's regulation § 382.305.

The BCPS transportation department provides route and extracurricular transportation for its students. With approximately 1,200 square miles to cover, the district uses two type A school buses and three Chevrolet Suburbans daily for regular routes.

Exhibit 5-30 provides a breakdown of the fleet, support vehicles, and equipment. Of the six regular buses, two have been placed out of service due to needed repairs. Special needs transportation is provided via a type A school bus with a lift. Currently, the district owns all of the vehicles in its fleet and does not lease any.

²⁴ National Highway Transportation Safety Administration – <http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

Exhibit 5-30
BCPS Bus Fleet, Support Vehicles, and Equipment

Inventory #	Year	Make/Model	Use	Bus
2	1999	Blue Bird / Type D Bus	Substitute, In Service	Bus
3	2000	Blue Bird / Type A Bus	Substitute, In Service	Bus
6	2002	Blue Bird / Type D Activity	Activity, In Service	Bus
7	2003	Ford / F-250	Maintenance, Spare	
9	1999	Jackson / Trailer		
12	2005	Chevrolet / Van		
15	2009	Chevrolet / Suburban		
16	2010	Chevrolet / Silverado	Maintenance, In Service	
17	2010	Chevrolet / Suburban	Route, In Service	
18	2010	Collins / Type A Lift Bus	Substitute, In Service	Bus
19	2010	Collins / Type A Bus	Route, In Service	Bus
20	2011	Showstar / Gooseneck Trailer		
22	2013	Chevrolet / Suburban	Activity, In Service	
23	2013	Chevrolet / Impala		
26	2015	Chevrolet / Silverado		
27	2016	Collins / Type A Bus	Route, In Service	Bus
28	2020	IC / Type D Activity	Activity, In Service	Bus
29	2018	Chevrolet / Suburban	Activity, In Service	
30	2018	Chevrolet / Suburban	Activity, In Service	
31	2018	Chevrolet / Malibu	Activity, In Service	

Source: BCPS, January 2019

After morning routes and in the evenings, the buses and suburbans are either taken home or parked in an enclosed covered area (**Exhibit 5-31**). The gates are locked each evening and unlocked each morning.

Exhibit 5-31
BCPS Bus Parking Area

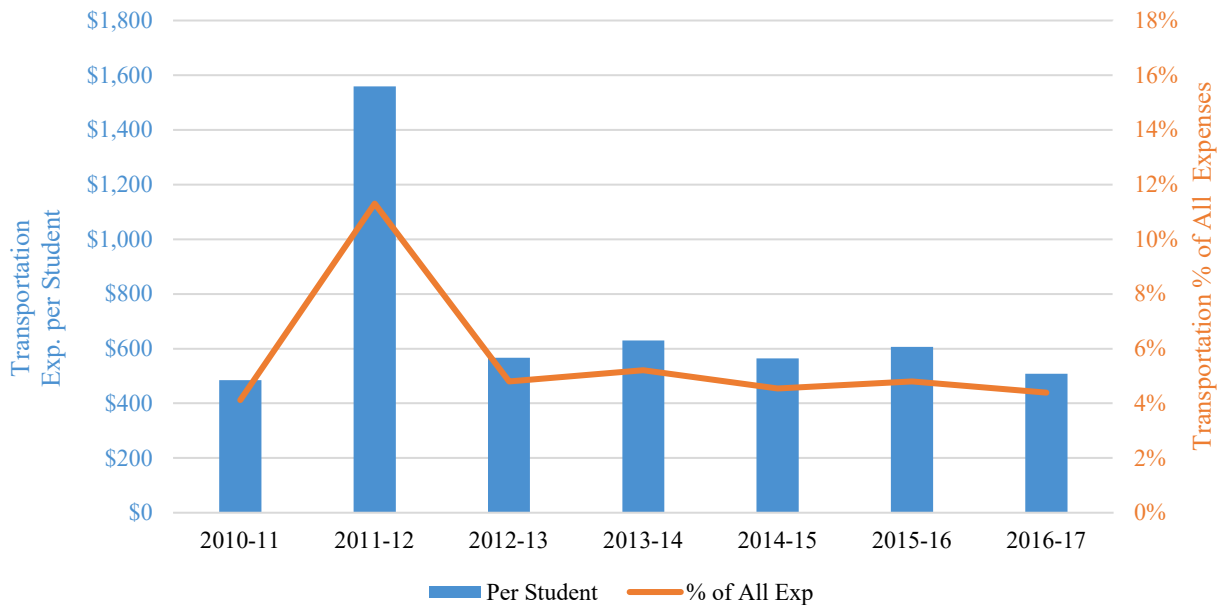


Source: Google Maps and Prismatic, February 2019

Currently, the district has 14 Oklahoma Commercial Driver's License (CDL) certified drivers to operate school buses. Drivers maintain their CDLs, with the proper endorsements and must report any moving violations to the high school principal, who assists in serving as the transportation director. Before the start of each school year and before any drivers are permitted to drive a school bus, drivers must submit to a full license review. BCPS then reviews the licenses for proper endorsement and infraction history. CDL policy mandates that any traffic infraction must be reported to the district immediately. The district maintains and files driving records that comply with the ODPS. The department maintains these records for the duration of the school year.

Exhibit 5-32 provides a seven-year comparison of BCPS transportation expenditures as a percent of total expenditures as well as the annual transportation expenditures per student. Over that time, transportation expenses have ranged from 4.1 percent to 11.3 percent of all expenditures. Transportation dollars per student have varied from \$485 to \$1,558 per student.

Exhibit 5-32
Trend in BCPS Transportation Expenses



Source: OCAS and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-33 compares BCPS’ transportation costs by category. In the past five years, salaries, benefits, and supplies decreased while purchased services, property, and other has increased. The overall total expenditures have decreased significantly.

Exhibit 5-33
Trend in BCPS Transportation Operating Costs

Expenditure Category	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Salaries	\$61,040	\$59,386	\$61,118	\$51,993	\$53,757	(11.9%) ▼
Benefits	\$20,273	\$19,674	\$20,674	\$20,882	\$16,920	(16.5%) ▼
Purchased Services	\$6,884	\$14,887	\$13,664	\$14,832	\$23,712	244.5% ▲
Supplies	\$56,887	\$52,215	\$38,096	\$27,692	\$33,164	(41.7%) ▼
Property	\$0	\$19,624	\$17,533	\$18,514	\$0	0.0% ●
Other	\$0	\$139	\$2,131	\$996	\$961	100.0% ▲
Total	\$145,084	\$165,926	\$153,217	\$134,910	\$128,514	(11.4%) ▼
Annual Percent Change		14.4% ▲	(7.7%) ▼	(11.9%) ▼	(4.7%) ▼	

Source: SDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-34 provides a comparison of just the expenses allocated to transportation in BCPS and the peers (excluding property expenses). As shown, BCPS’ transportation expenses were the third highest among its peers in 2016-17.

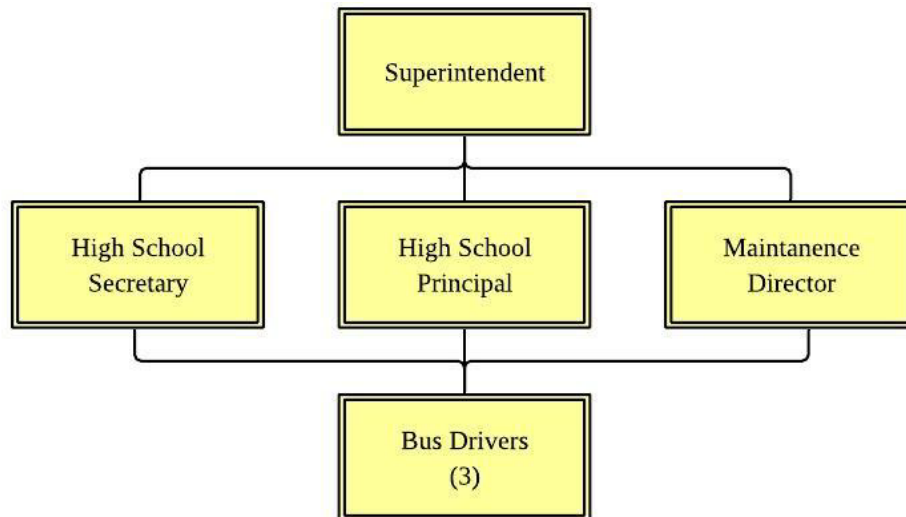
Exhibit 5-34
Comparison of Transportation Costs Over Time (Excluding Property Expenses)

Entity	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Percent Change
Boise City	\$162,813	\$160,317	\$145,881	\$125,618	\$134,110	(17.6%) ▼
Buffalo	\$58,667	\$59,272	\$55,902	\$88,889	\$50,124	(14.6%) ▼
Sentinel	\$145,320	\$145,549	\$115,558	\$117,768	\$97,294	(33.0%) ▼
Smithville	\$295,706	\$293,448	\$259,377	\$258,364	\$276,847	(6.4%) ▼
Tipton	\$109,146	\$77,676	\$78,925	\$61,621	\$41,038	(62.4%) ▼
Turpin	\$146,782	\$147,866	\$150,124	\$129,015	\$158,646	8.1% ▲
Peer Average	\$151,124	\$144,762	\$131,977	\$131,131	\$124,790	(17.4%) ▼

Source: SDE, OCAS, School District Expenditures, All Funds, 2012 through 2017, and Prismatic calculations

Exhibit 5-35 shows the current organizational structure of BCPS transportation. The high school principal, high school secretary, and maintenance director share the role of transportation director. There is no dedicated position for transportation director.

Exhibit 5-35
BCPS Transportation Organizational Structure



Source: Created by Prismatic, March 2019

FINDING 5-23

The district does not have an assigned transportation director and instead divides the job between the high school secretary, high school principal, and maintenance director. In interviews, the lack of an assigned transportation director was identified as a concern of all. The superintendent expressed a concern that district has been looking for a transportation director but has not been able to find someone.

The high school principal is responsible for all the district’s activity trips and assigns drivers to each activity bus not driven by a CDL licensed coach. This is then given to the high school

principal's secretary and she assigns the bus, informs the maintenance director, and issues fuel cards if necessary. All completed documents are turned into her office for data input or distribution to the high school principal, maintenance director, and superintendent's secretary.

The maintenance director is responsible for minor bus maintenance such as fueling and cleaning the activity buses inside and out. He receives driver work orders after they first go through the high school principal's office. It is his responsibility to make sure the activity buses are fueled and ready, which requires a visit to the high school principal's secretary for assignments.

RECOMMENDATION

Continue the search for someone to accept the part-time transportation director position.

This will permit the high school principal and maintenance director to focus on their specific assigned job areas. This will provide the drivers and district employees' one person to contact with transportation needs instead of the current process.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-24

The district has allowed buses to enter private property to pick students up, and then make a turn-around on private property. The district does not have a written agreement with the property owners to limit the district's liability.

In some cases, a turn-around on private property is the safest method. None of the stops appear to violate SDE regulations. Nevertheless, turn-arounds take additional time and increase the risk of property damage.

The district does not maintain agreements between the district and the respective land owners to limit the liability of the district while turning around on private property. A sample turn-around agreement is shown in **Exhibit 5-36**.

**Exhibit 5-36
Sample Bus Turn-Around Agreement**

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Address, City, State
Phone: Fax:

**SCHOOL BUS TURN-AROUND APPLICATION FORM
(For School Bus Turn-Around on Private Property)**

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____ Date: _____
 Legal Land Description: _____ Address: _____
 City/Town: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Email: _____

We request that Public Schools consider turn-around service for the following students:

Name of Student(s)	Grade	School

Parent Comments: _____

The Board retains the right to review and change the conditions on an ongoing basis.

Please return the "SCHOOL BUS TURN-AROUND AGREEMENT FORM" to the bus driver, who will forward to the Transportation Office for approval.

TURN-AROUND SERVICE WILL ONLY BE OFFERED IF PRIVATE ROAD IS MAINTAINED (GRADED AND PLOWED) AND A SUFFICIENT TURN-AROUND IS PROVIDED.

Exhibit 5-36 (continued)
Sample Bus Turn-Around Agreement

SCHOOL BUS TURN-AROUND AGREEMENT FORM			
<p>I/We, _____ and _____, acknowledge that we are the owner(s) of the property hereinafter described: _____ (LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION)</p>			
_____ (ADDRESS/ BOX)	_____ (TOWN)	_____ (STATE)	_____ (POSTAL CODE)
<p>I/We, acknowledge that we have granted permission to the Board to operate a school bus or school busses on our property for the purpose of pick-up/drop off child(ren) who are students in the [] Public Schools division.</p> <p>WHEREAS the Parent/Guardian has requested that the board provide School Bus Turn-Around Service to the above noted Legal Land Description upon the terms and subject to the conditions herein stated.</p> <p>WITNESSEED that the Parent/Guardian/Owner agree as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To sign a school Bus Yard Turn-Around Agreement on a yearly basis; 2. To ensure that the private road is developed and maintained to a standard to accommodate regular school bus travel; 3. To ensure that a proper turn-around exists; 4. Failure to maintain the road and turn-around in an acceptable condition can result in withdrawal of service; <p>IN CONSIDERATION of the Agreement of the Board to transport the forenamed child(ren), we/I agree to indemnify and to save harmless _____ Public Schools, its agents, administrators, and employees from and against all claims, demands, losses, costs, damages, actions, and causes of action of any nature whatsoever arising out of any act or omission, in relation to any damage to the real property described herein or any personal property on the said real property, if any of such damages arise from the operation of any matter related to operation of the said school bus or school busses.</p> <p>Signed this ____ day of _____, A.D. 20 ____.</p>			
_____ Parent/Guardian	_____ Witness	_____ Owner if different from Parent/Guardian	

Source: Created by Prismatic, April 2013

RECOMMENDATION

Review and document all turn-arounds on private property.

The district should not allow any new turn-arounds to be developed without the superintendent's prior approval. An acknowledgment/approval document that holds the district harmless should be developed between the landowners and the district for the current turn-arounds.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-25

The district meets SDE requirements regarding bus driver in-service training. The consulting team was informed that the SDE Regional Accreditation Officer (RAO) had just visited and approved the district's transportation records and training requirements.

The consulting team reviewed the practices of the department to meet the SDE requirements for yearly bus driver training. The district is using the training offered by the Oklahoma Association for Pupil Transportation (OAPT) and School Training Solutions.

COMMENDATION

BCPS has a procedure to give the drivers continued safety training.

FINDING 5-26

The district lacks a dedicated school bus driver handbook with written procedures and instructions for the transportation of students. Bus drivers do not receive written procedures or instructions regarding job performance expectations. Those individuals assigned to drive a school bus receive some general information, but little information is documented.

During the onsite visit, the consulting team ascertained that drivers were unaware of ODPS or SDE policies or manuals of instruction in the areas of pupil transportation (**Exhibit 5-37** through **Exhibit 5-40**). These give information on such topics as cell phones, student interaction, danger zones, loading and unloading, and emergency exits.

What information is received is generally received by video, word of mouth, or by means of historical practice. Route changes or addendums are added or changed to the route maps, as needed. Such information is kept on record in the superintendent's office and is dispersed to the appropriate driver.

Exhibit 5-37
ODPS Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Manual

SECTION 10 – School Buses

- **Danger Zones and Use of Mirrors**
- **Loading and Unloading**
- **Emergency Exit and Evacuation**
- **Railroad-Highway Crossings**
- **Student Management**
- **Antilock Braking Systems**
- **Special Safety Considerations**



This section is for drivers who will be driving school buses.

Source: ODPS CDL Publication, December 2018

Exhibit 5-38
ODPS Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Manual Excerpt

SECTION 10: School Buses

This Section Covers:

- Danger Zones and Use of Mirrors
- Loading and Unloading
- Emergency Exit and Evacuation
- Railroad-Highway Grade Crossings
- Student Management
- Antilock Braking Systems
- Special Safety Situation

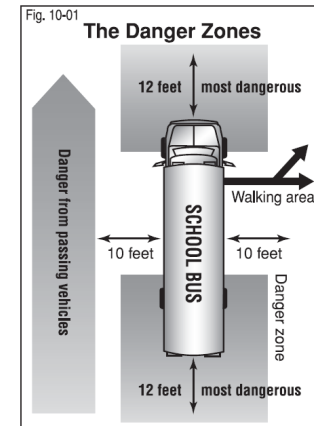
School bus drivers must have a commercial driver’s license if they drive a vehicle designed to transport (seat) 16 or more persons, including the driver.

School bus drivers must have a school bus endorsement in addition to a passenger endorsement on their commercial driver’s license (CDL). To get the school bus endorsement, you must pass a knowledge test on sections 2, 4, and 10 of this manual. (If your school bus has air brakes, you must also pass a knowledge test on Section 5.) You must also pass the skills test required for the class of school bus you drive or intend to drive.

This section does NOT provide information on all the federal and state requirements needed before you drive a school bus. You should be thoroughly familiar with all specific school bus procedures, laws, and regulations in your state and local school district.

State law requires school bus drivers to attend a 25-hour school bus driver workshop prior to operating a school bus in addition to obtaining a school bus endorsement. Contact your local school district transportation office for more information regarding the workshop.

around the bus and look for students, traffic, and other objects in this area. You should always check each mirror before operating the school bus to obtain the maximum viewing area consistent with the vision requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 111, “Mirror Systems.” If necessary, have the mirrors adjusted.



10.1 Danger Zones and Use of Mirrors

10.1.1 - Danger Zones

The danger zone is the area anywhere outside of the bus where children are in the most danger of being hit, either by another vehicle or their own bus. The danger zones extend as much as 30 feet from the front bumper, 10 feet from the left and right sides of the bus and 10 feet behind the rear bumper of the school bus. In addition, the area to the left of the bus is always considered dangerous because of passing vehicles. Figure 10.01 illustrates these danger zones.

10.1.2 - Correct Mirror Adjustment

Proper adjustment and use of all mirrors is vital to the safe operation of the school bus. Use mirrors to observe the danger zone

10.1.3 - Outside Left and Right Side Flat Mirrors

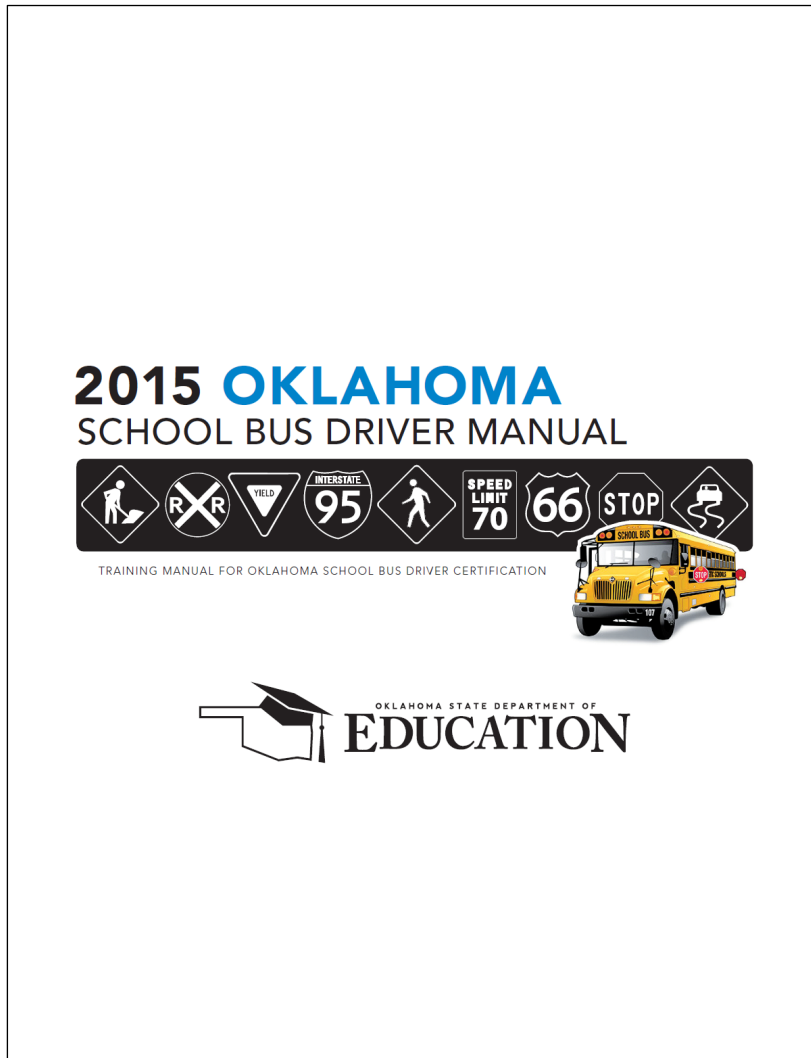
These mirrors are mounted at the left and right front corners of the bus at the side or front of the windshield. They are used to monitor traffic and check clearances and students on the sides and to the rear of the bus. There is a blind spot immediately below and in front of each mirror and directly in back of the rear bumper. The blind spot behind the bus could extend up to 400 feet depending on the width of the bus.

Ensure that the mirrors are properly adjusted so you can see:

- 200 feet or four bus lengths behind the bus
- Along the sides of the bus
- The rear tires touching the ground

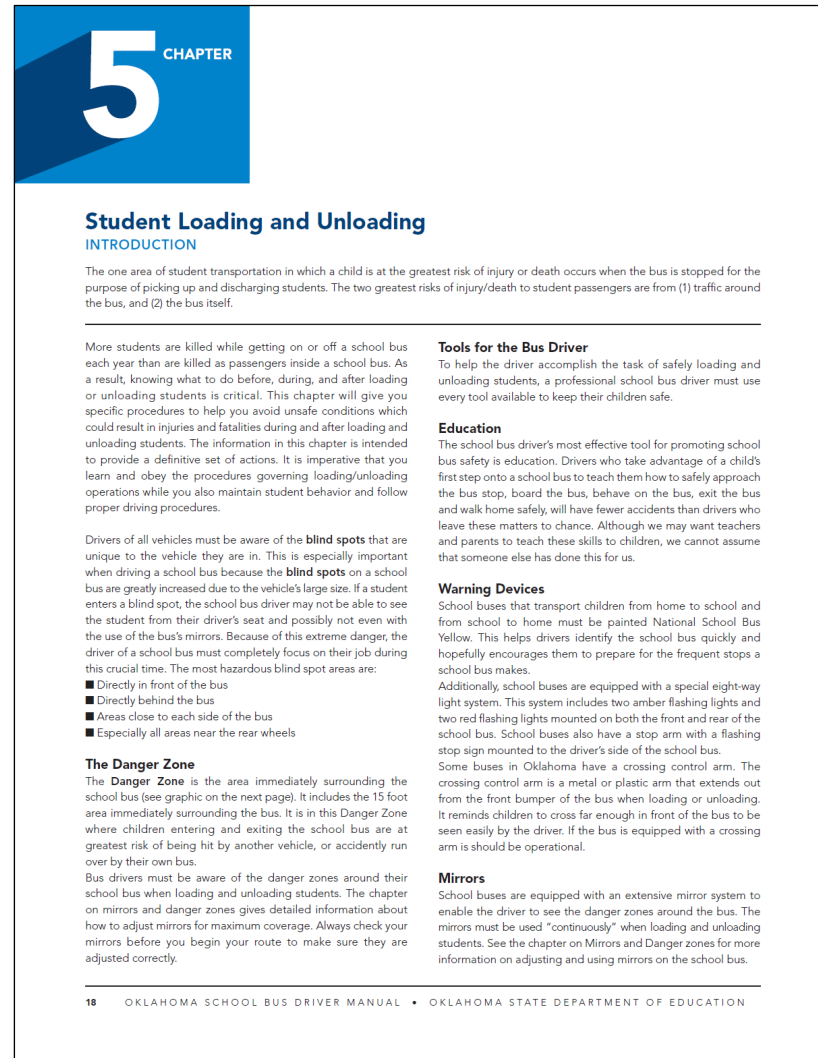
Source: ODPS CDL Publication, December 2018

Exhibit 5-39
Oklahoma SDE School Bus Driver Manual



Source: SDE Handbook, December 2018

Exhibit 5-40
Oklahoma SDE School Bus Driver Manual Excerpt



Source: SDE Handbook, December 2018

For example, Edmond Public Schools (EPS) has a robust training program for new drivers and a retraining program for existing drivers who need it. This surpasses state requirements and contributes to a safer working environment. EPS also provides its transportation employees with a 52-page handbook that covers all aspects of employment as well as directions on how to pick up and drop off students, road courtesy, and what to do in case of an accident. **Exhibit 5-41** provides the table of contents for the Edmond Handbook.

**Exhibit 5-41
EPS Transportation Handbook Table of Contents**

Table of Contents	
Welcome to Edmond Public Schools Transportation	0
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Road Courtesy.....	41
Accident Processing.....	42
Administration	43
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Notes.....	55

Source: EPS Transportation, October 2013

RECOMMENDATION

Develop an operations manual specific to student transportation.

The district should develop and distribute a driver's information notebook, specific to SDE Guidelines. General topics covered in the manual should include:

- Mission Statement / Vision / Goals
- Organizational Chart
- School Bus Operator Qualifications
- Driving Record Standards
- Driver Duties and Responsibilities
- Disciplinary Guidelines
- Student Conduct Form
- Student Management Techniques
- Cellular Telephone Use
- School Bus Idling
- Student Management Techniques
- Dress Code
- School Bus Crash/Accidents
- Incident Reporting Procedure
- Student Injuries and Illnesses
- Bus Stops and Walk-to-Stop Distances
- Field Trips
- Loading and Un-loading Students
- Certificate of Absence
- Leave Request
- Employee Agreement Form
- 2019-20 Payroll Schedule

Distribution of the notebook should be given during the mandated in-services held each school year. The district should also set aside time during the in-service to brief and instruct employees on the driver's notebook.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-27

BCPS lacks a policy or procedure to check for sleeping children after each route. Currently the driver has to check the bus, while the new buses are equipped with an automatic child check system for students. Incidents across the country are reported every year regarding children getting left behind on their bus rides. Most recently, a student was left on a bus in Somerville, Texas.²⁵ Preventing a potentially tragic situation begins with driver training and requires regular reinforcement of the important "walk-backs" after every trip.

²⁵ Falls, Clay. (2019). Somerville school bus driver faces felony for leaving student on bus. KBTX-TV. Retrieved from <https://www.kbtx.com/content/news/Somerville-school-bus-driver-facing-felony-for-leaving-student-on-bus-505084572.html>

A majority of the district's buses have electronic devices to assist drivers in this essential task. Any tool that contributes to passenger safety is a valuable asset to an operation.

RECOMMENDATION

Improve the procedure for checking buses for sleeping children.

One of the easiest and least expensive systems is the placard system (**Exhibit 5-42**). The system usually consists of designing a flyer/placard that is laminated with Velcro attached so that it can hang in the rearview window following an inspection. Once the driver finishes the route, he or she walks to the back of the bus looking for any children that may have fallen asleep. At the back of the bus, he or she places the placard in the rear window. When the driver returns to drive the next route, he or she walks to the back of the bus, removes the placard, and places it in the front driver's compartment.

Exhibit 5-42 Examples of Sleeping Children Placards



Source: Prismatic file photos

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-28

The district does not have a video recording system on the buses to aid in management of both driver and student. The need for a video recording system was expressed in the driver focus group.

Charged with transporting millions of children to and from school each year, it's only natural that safety is an essential element of a school bus. Video surveillance is a great safety tool for school buses, the benefits include:

- Protecting children – surveillance cameras allow them to keep children in check while navigating the route to or from school;²⁶
- Protecting buses – surveillance cameras pointed outside buses can help identify motorists who illegally pass buses or identify erratic and dangerous driver behavior;²⁷ and
- Protecting bus drivers – surveillance cameras placed inside the bus can protect the driver from any false accusations as well as the district.

RECOMMENDATION

Evaluate the cost and benefits of a video surveillance system on each school bus.

School bus safety continues to be a top concern, and a video surveillance system can be an important part of a school's safety plan. A school bus video surveillance system can increase student and driver safety and can deter bad behavior.

FISCAL IMPACT

To place a video surveillance system in the bus would require a DVR recorder and at least two cameras. The consulting team recommends, upon speaking to video system vendors, a minimum of four cameras per bus. Three cameras would be pointed inside the bus to get the best coverage possible and one camera pointed out the front windshield to monitor driver behavior and driving patterns of other vehicles. The team recommends the purchase of the equipment for the three route buses immediately and purchasing equipment for the suburbans the following year. This pricing is for the purchase of a four-camera system at \$1,346 per system.

Recommendation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Purchase bus video surveillance system.	(\$4,038)	(\$2,692)	\$0	\$0	\$0

FINDING 5-29

The superintendent and/or high school principal drives the routes before the start of school to evaluate the route for any problems. This drive allows the district to circumvent any areas that could shorten the life of the bus or suburban.

Before the beginning of each school year the district allows drivers to dry run each route to ensure proper route safety and efficiency. During dry-runs, the routes are monitored for road

²⁶ <https://www.videosurveillance.com/school-buses.asp>

²⁷ Ibid.

conditions and future new stops. Routes are set to a beginning time and calculated to arrive at each school no later than ten minutes before the first bell.

COMMENDATION

BCPS is commended for driving each bus route for safety and accuracy.

FINDING 5-30

The district relies on paid invoices as vehicle maintenance records. While this system records billed maintenance and fuel costs, it does not record any work done on site.

This system limits the district's ability to schedule and track preventive maintenance on its buses such as changing oil, checking brakes, and inspecting tires. In addition, this practice places the district at risk should a severe accident occur, and the vehicle history is questioned; when a school bus accident occurs, one of the first records reviewed is the maintenance record.

In addition to tracking and scheduling preventive maintenance, an effective maintenance program can be used to:

- maintain records of work orders;
- track parts and vendor history;
- track warranties;
- track fuel usage and fuel inventory;
- track cost per mile;
- maintain personnel records; and
- generate management reports that allow the district to measure and monitor performance.

RECOMMENDATION

Track all repairs and fuel usage for each vehicle.

The district should develop an individual file for each district vehicle that would contain the complete history of the vehicle from purchase to disposal. Given the size of the fleet, a specialized computer system is not necessary; tracking the necessary information could easily be accomplished in a generic spreadsheet program. Copies of supporting documentation (invoices, warranties, etc.) should be maintained in files by vehicle as well.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources.

FINDING 5-31

The district has a contract with a family who lives outside the current bus routes to deliver their student to and from school to save money. This is enabling the district to save time and wear and tear on a vehicle.

The family lives 40 miles from the school. The current Internal Revenue Service (IRS) mileage rate is \$0.58 per mile. Using the IRS mileage rate, the district would spend \$8,166 on a 176 day school year. According to American Automobile Association (AAA) the cost of driving a 4WD SUV is \$0.74 per mile based on 15,000 miles.²⁸ The district was able to make a contract with the parent to pay \$500 per semester since the mother works in Boise City proper. This saves the district \$7,166 per year without adding labor costs.

COMMENDATION

Contracting with the family to transport their student to school is saving the district money each semester and providing a stipend for the family to help cover an existing expense.

FINDING 5-32

The consulting team found safety issues in the maintenance shop that had not been addressed. Safety is everyone's responsibility and using the shop as a storage area can be dangerous.

Exhibit 5-43 shows the deficiencies the consulting team found in the shop. There was clutter between the activity buses and trash along the walls. There was an open container filled with used oil close to the garage overhead door. Also, upon entering the shop through the front door, a PVC pipe is protruding from the floor approximately 18" tall in the walk area.

²⁸ Edmonds, Ellen. (2014). Owning and operating your vehicle just got a little cheaper according to AAA's 2014 "Your Driving Costs" study. Retrieved from: <https://newsroom.aaa.com/tag/driving-cost-per-mile/>

**Exhibit 5-43
Observed Shop Deficiencies**

Clutter Between Activity Buses



Trash Along Wall



Open Oil Container



PVC Pipe in Doorway



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Address condition of the maintenance shop for safety violations.

The transportation shop's safety and cleanliness issues should be addressed. These include:

- open containers of oil should be properly secured;

-
- waste oil should be identified and disposed of through a local company specializing in waste oil removal;
 - all trash should be collected;
 - clutter should be cleared between activity buses for safe travel;
 - PVC pipe needs to be removed or a safety barrier installed; and
 - safety posters should be obtained and placed in proper areas.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, slips, trips, and falls make up the majority of general industry accidents, which account for about 25 percent of all reported injury claims per fiscal year and about 65 percent of all work days lost.²⁹ Proper housekeeping in work and traffic areas is still the most effective way to reduce trip hazards.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing resources with the possible exception of the safety barrier.

FINDING 5-33

The district purchased a new activity bus and made sure it was equipped with hydraulic brakes due to the lack of drivers with the air brake endorsement. This has allowed coaches transferring from other districts to drive the bus to games.

The difficulty in licensing CDL drivers for school districts has required districts to look at other ways to find drivers. According to the three major bus companies in Oklahoma, the majority of school districts use hydraulic brakes on their buses. Because of this, BCPS purchased a new activity bus with hydraulic brakes to increase the number of drivers licensed to drive the bus. The district currently has only three CDL drivers with air brake endorsement out of 14: the high school principal, maintenance director, and superintendent.

COMMENDATION

Purchasing the hydraulic brake bus has allowed coaches to drive to activity trips and not rely on the superintendent, high school principal and director of maintenance.

FINDING 5-34

The consulting team found most of the district's buses to be in good condition. However, there were some safety and mechanical issues that need to be addressed.

²⁹ <http://www.reliableplant.com/Read/27549/Prevent-slips-trips-falls>

Bus drivers are required to clean and inspect buses for mechanical malfunctions on a daily basis. However, the consulting team found several defects that were not reported by means of the Daily Inspection Sheet, and repairs or cleaning that had not been done.

As a requirement for operating a school bus in the State of Oklahoma, drivers must complete a daily record (**Exhibit 5-44**) of the condition of the bus and report any defects. During the site visit, the consulting team conducted bus inspections. Several buses were found to have missing or damaged equipment (**Exhibit 5-45**).

Exhibit 5-44 OSDE Pre-Trip Form

SDE Pre-Trip form OAC 210:30-5-6 6/2016 Chapter 2 of the Oklahoma School Bus Driver's Manual has thorough Pre-Trip Instructions					
District _____ Dates _____ Bus _____ Starting Mileage _____ Ending Mileage _____ Driver _____ ✓ - satisfactory condition X - repair needed ○ - Repair completed					
Exterior Cross through days for weekend trips					
	mo	tu	we	th	fr
Lights, Lenses and Reflective material					
Windshield					
Windows					
Wipers					
Service Door					
Mirrors					
Bumpers					
Fuel Cap/Door					
Drive Shaft					
Exhaust					
Frame					
Suspension					
Brakes					
Stop Arm					
Battery Box					
Optional equipment					
Engine Compartment					
Fluids					
Belts and Hoses					
Fuses					
Wiring					
Air compressor					
Alternator					
Water pump					
Steering assembly					
Suspension					
Wheels					
Tires (CTI)					
Rims/Lugs					
Hubs					
Inside					
Step well					
Emergency Equipment					
Driver's Seat					
Mirrors					
Windshield					
Wipers					
Switches and gauges					
Lights (dome)					
Exits					
Seats					
Aisles					
Air Brake Test					
Pressure Retention					
Low pressure warning					
Spring brake test					
Pressure build					
Parking brake hold					
5mph test					
Hydraulic Brake Test					
Brake hold test (Emergency/Parking)					
Pedal pressure test					
Reserve system test (if equipped)					
Other Items (If equipped)					
Lift					
Securement Equipment					
Crossing Gates					
A/C					
Comments on defects					
Repairs complete by _____ Date _____					
POST TRIP Child Check					

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, December 2018

**Exhibit 5-45
BCPS Fleet Inspection**

Bus #	2	3	6	18	19	27	28
Mirrors	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/R	✓	✓
Glass	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/R	✓	✓
Tires	✓	✓	✓	N/R	✓	N/R	✓
Body Damage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seats	N/R	✓	✓	✓	N/R	✓	✓
Flooring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergency Door	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/R	✓
Clean Inside	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	✓	✓
Clean Outside	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	✓
Fire Extinguisher	✓	✓	✓	N/R	N/R	✓	✓
First Aid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Body Fluid Kit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Triangles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alarm (Sleeping Kids)	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	✓	✓
Lights	N/R	✓	✓	N/R	N/R	✓	✓

*Source: Prismatic, February 2019
Index: ✓ = OK, N/R = Needs Review*

Exhibit 5-46 shows the deficiencies the consulting team found. As shown, several repairs are needed to prevent future safety issues.

**Exhibit 5-46
Observed Bus Deficiencies**

Emergency Door Safety Hazard



Seat Repair



Out of Date Inspection-Fire Extinguisher



Repair Made With Packing Tape



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

**Exhibit 5-46 (continued)
Observed Bus Deficiencies**

Wood Boards Holding Windows



Repair Made with Duct Tape



Tire Tread at Wear Mark



Mirror Repaired with Duct Tape



Source: Prismatic, February 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Address the condition of some of the buses.

The maintenance director will need to ensure that all standards of performance on vehicle readiness and required documentation is complete before and after a vehicle is placed into service. BCPS should ensure that each bus is repaired to original specifications of that bus and

review the SDE Oklahoma School Bus Driver Manual with the drivers. This manual will give each driver the policies and procedures that regulate the inspection of the bus and proper safety guidelines for pupil transportation until the district can develop their own driver's manual.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation can be implemented with existing budgeted resources.

Appendix A:
Staff Survey Results

Staff Survey

Surveys Completed: 38

Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Statistical Data

How long have you been employed by the school district?	
5 years or less	46%
6 – 10 years	26%
11 – 15 years	11%
16 – 20 years	9%
21 years or more	9%
What is your role in the school district?	
School Administrator	9%
Classroom Teacher	33%
Other Certified (Librarian, Guidance Counselor)	12%
School Aide/Nurse	6%
Instructional Aide	24%
Other Support Staff (Cafeteria, Office, Custodial)	15%

Survey Questions

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The district has a long-range strategic plan that guides the decision-making process.	3%	45%	39%	13%	0%
2	I understand the district's policies and procedures.	18%	53%	8%	18%	3%
3	I have an accurate, written job description to guide me in my work.	24%	53%	11%	8%	5%
4	I understand the district's organizational structure.	22%	57%	8%	3%	11%
5	I know to whom I report for all my job functions.	37%	55%	0%	3%	5%
6	I understand the district's salary schedule and justification for paying extra-duty stipends.	35%	51%	3%	8%	3%
7	I receive adequate training overall to perform my job functions.	21%	42%	8%	18%	11%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8	I received an annual personnel evaluation last year.	18%	26%	26%	8%	21%
9	District staff works well together.	16%	38%	5%	27%	14%
10	The district has an adequate number of staff to carry out its operations.	11%	51%	11%	11%	16%
11	The district actively recruits high quality staff to fill vacant positions.	20%	31%	17%	23%	9%
12	The district has a pool of quality substitutes to fill positions when necessary.	11%	22%	5%	41%	22%
13	The district effectively communicates with parents and community members.	8%	41%	14%	27%	11%
14	The central office effectively communicates with district staff.	16%	38%	19%	19%	8%
15	The superintendent effectively communicates with district staff.	14%	46%	14%	19%	8%
16	The principals effectively communicate with their staffs.	8%	41%	11%	19%	22%
17	The teachers effectively communicate with students and parents.	19%	65%	14%	3%	0%
18	The district effectively uses volunteers to assist with meeting district goals.	16%	22%	49%	11%	3%
19	The district gives student needs a high priority when making major decisions.	14%	57%	14%	11%	5%
20	School board members listen to the opinions of parents and the community members.	14%	32%	38%	11%	5%
21	The school board understands the needs of the district.	14%	27%	38%	16%	5%
22	The superintendent is accessible to district staff.	35%	51%	8%	5%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23	The principals are accessible to their staffs.	27%	46%	5%	16%	5%
24	The teachers are accessible to students and parents.	38%	59%	3%	0%	0%
25	Teachers often collaborate on projects related to the curriculum.	11%	38%	32%	19%	0%
26	Teachers know what is to be taught and when because they have access to a district-adopted Pacing Calendar that reflects the current Oklahoma Academic Standards (PASS).	16%	41%	38%	3%	3%
27	The district's curriculum is aligned from grade to grade and from class to class.	11%	35%	41%	14%	0%
28	Teachers have scope and sequence documents that determine what is taught and when.	8%	32%	49%	11%	0%
29	Test data from district-adopted benchmarks and mandated end-of-year tests are used to improve the district's curriculum.	8%	41%	41%	11%	0%
30	Teachers effectively use student data to improve instructional practices.	8%	54%	30%	8%	0%
31	The principals are effective instructional leaders.	14%	38%	14%	22%	14%
32	There is adequate high quality professional development for the principals and teachers.	8%	24%	22%	38%	8%
33	Non-teaching staff has opportunities for professional development relevant to their responsibilities.	0%	41%	19%	24%	16%
34	At least some of the required annual professional development is offered online.	14%	68%	14%	5%	0%
35	The needs of the special education students are being met.	24%	46%	19%	5%	5%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36	The needs of the gifted and talented are being met.	16%	58%	0%	21%	5%
37	Teachers adequately prepare students for state mandated tests.	7%	90%	0%	3%	0%
38	Students are adequately prepared for college, if they choose that path.	12%	73%	0%	15%	0%
39	Students receive timely information on college entrance requirements and scholarship offers.	48%	52%	0%	0%	0%
40	Students receive adequate vocational training to prepare them for the workforce, if they choose that path.	27%	55%	0%	14%	5%
41	The district provides students with adequate counseling services.	35%	52%	0%	13%	0%
42	The school library meets the needs of the teachers and students.	17%	83%	0%	0%	0%
43	District stakeholders provide input into the budgetary process.	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
44	I understand the district's budgetary process.	9%	59%	0%	18%	14%
45	The district actively applies for competitive state and federal grants.	17%	67%	0%	17%	0%
46	I complete an annual inventory of the equipment in my work area.	21%	59%	0%	21%	0%
47	The district wisely manages its revenues and expenditures.	22%	63%	0%	11%	4%
48	The district has a long-range plan to address facility needs.	9%	70%	0%	17%	4%
49	The district's facilities are well-maintained.	15%	61%	0%	12%	12%
50	The district's facilities are kept clean.	42%	58%	0%	0%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
51	The district has an energy management program in place to minimize energy consumption.	13%	88%	0%	0%	0%
52	There are facility and/or equipment concerns throughout the campus.	21%	58%	0%	21%	0%
53	The district's facilities are secure from unwanted visitors.	4%	41%	0%	48%	7%
54	I know what to do during a crisis or an emergency.	28%	56%	0%	13%	3%
55	Student discipline is well-maintained.	10%	50%	0%	40%	0%
56	Drugs are a problem in this district.	19%	68%	0%	10%	3%
57	Bullying is a problem in this district.	3%	62%	0%	31%	3%
58	I often purchase a meal from the cafeteria.	9%	52%	0%	33%	6%
59	Students seem to like the cafeteria meals.	3%	37%	0%	47%	13%
60	I find the cafeteria meals appealing and appetizing.	0%	36%	0%	39%	24%
61	I understand how to use technology as it relates to my job functions.	22%	75%	0%	3%	0%
62	District staff and administrators often use email to communicate with one another.	26%	68%	0%	6%	0%
63	The district has adequate technology to support its operations.	13%	55%	0%	16%	16%
64	When necessary, the district's technology equipment is quickly repaired or serviced.	23%	48%	0%	26%	3%
65	Technology is readily accessible and easy to use in the performance of my job duties.	23%	52%	0%	23%	3%
66	The district's technology equipment is often used past its useful lifespan.	24%	72%	0%	4%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
67	The district website is a useful tool for staff, parents, and students.	18%	79%	0%	3%	0%
68	Buses arrive and depart on time each day.	25%	72%	0%	3%	0%
69	There are enough working buses to meet the needs of the district.	29%	54%	0%	13%	4%

Written Responses

If you would like to provide any additional comments on the school district, please do so here. Where is the district doing well? In what areas could it be improved?

- I think the district is doing well this year. I feel like we are very well staffed in a way that is better educating our students. I think that communication is an area that could be worked on.
- Communication of all staff discipline of students, dress codes Students need to follow rules.
- I enjoy all of the staff but i do see where there are so many that do not get along with others. I also feel that our school needs MAJOR improvement on communication. When the community knows about what is going on in our school before the teachers and staff do then you know there is a problem. I love my job as I have been here for several years but there is a lot of room for improvement. Thank you for your time.
- More communication with the administration in the staff.
- Planning times are often taken away from classroom teachers because they supposedly can't find subs for specials teachers. Professional development is not available or provided. We are not communicated with consistently or regularly. Often times we are treated as if we don't matter and our opinions don't count. For some reason many things that happen in the district are kept a secret from us, yet we hear them around town or from people that are not associated with the school. When parents go to administrators about something that happens in class, the majority of times we, as teachers, are not notified or asked our side of the story. There is no consistent protocol followed or in place for parent visitors. Teachers are not treated as professionals by some administrators and that trickles down to parents and kids. There is no consistent school wide discipline plan or set of rules. And it varies greatly in certain classes. Sometimes discipline from the office is based on which child it is and who their parents are. Often times my administrator doesn't see the proper reasoning for why something happens in my classroom. He doesn't like it or thinks it's silly so it's not important, although it is a developmentally appropriate practice. We do not hold students to high expectations for behavior, academics, etc.
- The administration needed listen better to staff and support staff.
- I feel I have NO support from my direct administration, and I cannot go to my administration because he knows nothing about the age level I teach. He himself has made

the comment that he has no early childhood experience repeatedly, but he is also able to evaluate my ability as a teacher... I have not received one piece of constructive criticism, or ANY help or direction when I have questions in the 3 years he has been my principal. This is my main source of frustration and the number one reason I want to quit my job, and am currently looking for a new place of employment.

- Communication could be improved between campuses.
- Communication is a serious issue for the entire district. No one seems to know what is going on. Elementary and High School principals blame the superintendent and the superintendent blames the principals. The cafeteria needs to provide meals that are appetizing. More food is thrown away than eaten. For some of our low income students, breakfast and lunch school meals are the only meals they get a day.
- There is a lot of turmoil that goes on in our district. We need to be helping and supporting each other and not tearing each other and parents down. Too many negative attitudes and everybody jumping to the wrong conclusions. To be a successful district, we all need to communicate and support each other. We are a team and need to show our students that!
- Communication could be improved. The cafeteria could be improved.

Appendix B:
Parent Survey Results

Parent Survey

*Surveys Completed: 86
Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Survey Questions

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	School board members listen to the opinions and desires of parents and community members.	6%	31%	31%	24%	8%
2	School board members know and understand the educational needs of students in the district.	9%	33%	24%	28%	6%
3	The superintendent is a respected and effective leader.	13%	34%	27%	16%	9%
4	District and school staffs are accessible to parents.	19%	64%	11%	4%	4%
5	I feel welcome at my child's school.	24%	60%	9%	5%	2%
6	My child feels welcome and accepted at school.	21%	65%	6%	6%	2%
7	I receive timely communications from my child's teachers regarding his/her progress in school.	19%	53%	11%	16%	1%
8	My child's school encourages parents to volunteer, if they are able.	12%	56%	19%	9%	4%
9	Parents play an active role in decision-making in our school.	1%	33%	27%	32%	7%
10	Education is the main priority in our school district.	11%	41%	21%	19%	8%
11	Students learn the necessary material to be prepared for the next grade.	5%	60%	14%	19%	2%
12	I am satisfied with the education my child receives.	8%	54%	16%	18%	4%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13	Teachers are held accountable for ensuring that students learn.	9%	49%	16%	21%	4%
14	I receive enough information from the district regarding academic expectations for my child (i.e. student testing, retention, etc.).	7%	49%	19%	20%	5%
15	Our school can be described as a “good place to learn.”	7%	63%	18%	8%	4%
16	The district spends its money wisely.	1%	25%	54%	14%	6%
17	The district asks the community for input when developing its budget.	1%	9%	47%	33%	9%
18	My child’s school is clean.	29%	62%	7%	2%	0%
19	My child’s school is attractive and welcoming.	11%	74%	8%	6%	1%
20	My child’s school is well maintained.	14%	67%	11%	6%	2%
21	District facilities are open for community use.	11%	46%	33%	5%	5%
22	My child feels safe and secure at school.	19%	69%	9%	2%	1%
23	Bullying is a problem in this district.	12%	30%	25%	28%	5%
24	Drugs are a problem in this district.	22%	30%	26%	20%	2%
25	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	8%	64%	14%	10%	5%
26	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered in my child’s school.	5%	46%	19%	21%	10%
27	The district website is a useful tool for me and/or my child.	6%	48%	17%	19%	10%
28	I regularly use technology to keep up-to-date on my child’s education (emailing teachers, online gradebook, etc.).	14%	43%	21%	15%	7%
29	My child regularly uses technology at school.	14%	73%	10%	4%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
30	Teachers know how to use technology in the classroom.	10%	67%	22%	0%	1%
31	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	5%	53%	30%	8%	5%
32	The school lunch period is long enough for my child to eat.	2%	51%	22%	19%	6%
33	My child likes the food served in the cafeteria.	0%	35%	26%	24%	15%
34	The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	5%	36%	32%	14%	14%
35	My child's school bus runs on time nearly every day.	8%	13%	79%	1%	0%
36	My child feels safe riding the bus.	11%	20%	65%	4%	0%
37	Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the bus.	7%	21%	67%	5%	0%
38	The length of my child's bus ride is reasonable.	7%	15%	74%	2%	1%

Written Responses

If you would like to provide any additional comments on the school district, please do so here. Where is the district doing well? In what areas could it be improved?

- The school lunches are horrible and the way they feed the JR. High and HS is terrible. Food is cold by the time it gets to those kids.
- The school lunch is cold
- The website needs work! There is nothing on it.
- Personally love BC schools and teachers. I have not experienced any issues with my children but have heard that the elementary principal is unfair also been called a bully. I also know kids that come from other towns are a little more advanced in their education. Teachers are doing as they are told, and do not get enough credit. No one listens or attends all their needs.
- Love [deleted]!
- I think the way I am taught it good. I love my school. I wish we had more arts. My grand daughter helped fill this out she's raised to think her opinion is important in her school.
- Accountability of teachers doing their job is lacking! People who are not qualified to be over teachers should be qualified! That is the purpose of their job! Administration should listen to the majority of community's opinions - there maybe a problem if they keep

hearing the same concerns. lack of school pride! - if teachers don't expect great things from the kids, the kids don't expect great things. Who has a pep rally at 8 AM?! Oh! We don't have them anymore! Hanging of the green? Several things for the kids that are of no importance - maybe for good reason? But that goes back to school pride. Kids are just buying time until they get out- sounds like jail. Where are high standards? Where is the sense of belonging? Teamwork? Importance of a good quality education? There are good options in life, lets set high goals for our kids so they can reach and strive for them. Teachers are mostly nice, just more and more seem to be there for the paycheck!

- Really great school and staff. Could improve and update playground more safely for the kids. Also keep school yard more well kept.
- Sports should not be the main focus. Education standards/expectations should be higher. I do feel informed about my child's education but friends of mine don't. The website calendar is crap! Fix it! Sports schedules should not change after school year Starts! Our kids have home lives if you let them!
- This is our first year at Boise City Schools and everyone is very friendly and my kids love the school and fit in great.
- Need more parent/teacher communication about grades and students work/class ethics, not doing homework before it gets out of hand.
- Longer Lunch Hour - better selection of food
- I feel that it would be a great idea to have an intercom system added so that the front door of the school is locked and only unlocked when the person requesting entrance is recognized. I feel this would prevent dangerous situations that happen all over the United States. Right now the door to the school is wide open at all times which I feel is so dangerous. The community could hold a fundraiser to raise money to get the intercom system and door locks in place. It is such an important safety feature I think people would donate to the cause without much persuasion.
- No school nurse, have one on call. No Child psychologist, have one available when needed. Resources should be primary on the children test scores and grades improvement NOT SPORTS. Sports wont earn my child a good landing job. Am serious on homeschooling the test scores are poorly . A must afterschool tutoring.
- The elementary principal is not consistent with his treatment of children or his interaction with parents. His discipline is not consistent. Fortunately, my child has not been in trouble, but I have witnessed this with others. When concerns are brought up to principals or the school board members, they are treated like "no big deal", even if multiple parents are bringing up the same concerns.
- Things are done on "who you are". Instead of even across the board. Teachers aren't allowed to purchase things they need for class because of not enuff funding.
- Our schools could focus more on education and less on athletics. Our kids deserve a school where they can learn and some of our teachers are great at doing this but some are lacking. Bullying is a big problem and it needs to be dealt with immediately. We may not be a big school but we need to follow the rules as if we were so that our kids won't be in shock when they go to college.
- Administration could learn to be a little more open to outside opinions. They have lost good people due their narrow mindedness and it's a shame to see young people leave our staff. We can not afford to lose anyone. I hope that budgets can be of immediate attention

and changes can be made to appropriately pay staff that have the skills to complete their job.

- I am able to visit anytime through email with my child's teacher and they are quick to respond. I do think the school is very clean and they have a janitor who is always busy from my view. The school has access to whatever stranger at any entrance because doors aren't kept locked and secure. My child does not feel scared but I am not super comfortable with the idea of not much security on the campus.
- I would like a change in the cafeteria food and time to longer and for kindergarten kids to be able to use the microwave with teacher assistance.
- On the question of does my child learn the proper material when completing a grade the answer isn't a simple yes or no. We have some great teachers and we also have some placeholder teachers. I would like to see administration foster a stronger relationship with OPSU to recruit new talent.
- My child's teacher is a great teacher and does so well with her students. She makes them behave and teaches them right from wrong. We love our child's teacher! The communication in the whole school needs to be improved. As well as the cafeteria food needs to be improved. More food is thrown away than eaten. Also discipline needs to be fair for all kids and not just depend on who you are.
- Teach trades put shop and skills back in the schools don't teach anything anymore it's all about the darn test how to take test practice for the test no life skills anymore
- Add baseball
- Improving communication would be a good start. My child HATES the cafeteria food. Most of it is pre-packaged crap.

Appendix C:
Student Survey Results

Student Survey

*Surveys Completed: 40
Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.*

Survey Questions

	Survey Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Education is the main priority in our school district.	8%	40%	23%	20%	10%
2	Students learn the necessary material to be prepared for the next grade.	15%	50%	23%	13%	0%
3	I am being academically prepared for life after high school.	15%	38%	26%	13%	8%
4	Our schools can be described as “good places to learn.”	15%	50%	25%	10%	0%
5	I knew what to expect on the state tests.	23%	40%	18%	10%	10%
6	There is at least one adult at school to whom I can go when I have a problem.	40%	33%	23%	3%	3%
7	I feel welcome and accepted at school.	25%	58%	5%	10%	3%
8	The school library meets my needs for books and other resources.	23%	35%	18%	18%	8%
9	I have received sufficient college and/or career counseling.	13%	40%	23%	23%	3%
10	My teachers communicate regularly with my parents about my academic progress.	15%	30%	33%	18%	5%
11	My school is clean.	35%	45%	15%	3%	3%
12	My school is attractive and welcoming.	18%	35%	28%	18%	3%
13	My school building is well maintained.	34%	53%	8%	3%	3%
14	I feel safe and secure at school.	26%	42%	18%	11%	3%
15	Bullying is a problem in this district.	8%	21%	37%	24%	11%
16	The school buildings and grounds are safe and secure.	26%	37%	29%	8%	0%

Survey Questions		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17	Discipline is fairly and equitably administered in this school.	16%	39%	29%	11%	5%
18	Teachers and staff respect students in this school.	19%	62%	14%	5%	0%
19	Drugs are a problem in this school.	14%	35%	35%	11%	5%
20	Discipline and order are maintained in the school cafeteria.	11%	43%	27%	14%	5%
21	I have enough time to eat my lunch each day.	8%	35%	11%	16%	30%
22	I like the food served in the cafeteria.	5%	16%	24%	22%	32%
23	The cafeteria serves a good variety of food.	8%	24%	16%	19%	32%
24	The district has made online classes available to students.	22%	35%	30%	8%	5%
25	I regularly use technology to keep up-to-date on schoolwork (emailing teachers, using online gradebook, etc.)	32%	43%	11%	11%	3%
26	I regularly use computers or other technology at school.	27%	35%	8%	24%	5%
27	The district's technology is new enough to be useful to me.	16%	19%	27%	11%	27%
28	Teachers know how to use technology in the classroom.	16%	46%	27%	8%	3%
29	Teachers effectively integrate technology-based resources into instruction, such as online videos.	22%	24%	30%	19%	5%
30	I have regular Internet access at home.	49%	32%	5%	3%	11%
31	My bus runs on time nearly every day.	8%	14%	67%	8%	3%
32	Students feel safe riding the bus.	14%	31%	56%	0%	0%
33	Bus drivers effectively handle discipline issues on the bus.	19%	25%	53%	3%	0%
34	The length of my bus ride is reasonable.	11%	25%	50%	6%	8%

Written Responses

If you would like to provide any additional comments on the school district, please do so here. Where is the district doing well? In what areas could it be improved?

- The cafeteria food
- The school is swell. The school could be more disinclined. I got suspended for leaving a game during cheer because my mom got sick but then 2 others girls didn't get suspended even though work isn't an excuse and it is in our contract. The other girl "got sick" but they never got suspended for the games the missed.
- I think that our school needs to put our education first before sports because it seems sports is first priority here.
- on technolgy
- The district is doing well in welcoming students, as well as the teachers involving themselves with fun around school. We could improve on drills for safety reasons and put education first.
- We need memes. Meme 🤝 Review 🤝 Subscribe to pewdiepie
- A lot of things could change, though our school is okay. Our school needs to put education and health first before sports. Also safety drill could be improved.

Appendix D:
Community Focus Group

Community Input Focus Group Comments

The Community Input Focus Group was held on December 12, 2018. There were five participants (parents) who were asked to provide their opinions and concerns regarding most areas of the school district. The comments below are those provided by the participants.

What are the best things about this school district?

- Most of the teachers care and they help you raise your kids. They keep an eye on kids.
- We know each other's kids and we watch out for each other.

MANAGEMENT, PERSONNEL, AND COMMUNICATIONS

School Board

- A lot of people on the board that don't have kids in the system any more. They have less awareness and understanding of the problems of the district as a result.

Management

- The ES principal is growing into the job. He is "very present" in the school.
- Because the superintendent is retiring this year, he has somewhat checked out of some job aspects.
- Superintendent is a respected financial manager and has done some good things for the school.

Personnel

- Limited pool of applicants, plus we're close to states that pay better than Oklahoma.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

- Teachers are available to parents.
- Limited resources sometimes impacts what happens in the classroom.
- Getting teachers out here is just hard.
- Teaching is not as strong as when some went to school here.
- Class sizes used to be much smaller than they are now.
- There is variation in the strength of teachers.
- The lack of high school courses often ends up with kids pursuing college classes.

- There are lots of classes that high school kids would like to take that we just don't offer.
- Lack of funding has led to a reduced variety of courses.
- Students are not as competitive on college applications because they don't have the course breadth.
- We feel that the district has tried to avoid online course options.
- The district tries to keep all the kids in one grade in the same math classes only because it makes the scheduling easier.
- We used to have a STEM program. Where did it go?
- What happened to the chess club?
- The elementary school needs books.
- Foreign language is only offered online.
- Odyssey classes are tough. Some kids see those as harder than college classes.
- We don't have a Spanish teacher here?
- The way we handle the kids who come to the district not speaking any English seems wrong. We end up with the bilingual kids helping the monolingual Spanish kids – the teachers are not Spanish-speaking and cannot bridge the gap. We don't seem to have the resources to help these kids learn English.
- Special education in this district is extremely limited, particularly the extra support services. We haven't had physical therapy here for years.
- It's hard to see if ITB/OT is working for students.
- We may just be getting special needs students only because it's the only real option in the area (other districts have even less). It may also be that parents of IEP students seek out smaller districts, like Boise City, because they feel they will get more personalized services.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS / FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- There is no money.
- Sometimes the district spends money on unnecessary things.
- Community does a good job of supporting the school and filling the money gap.
- Teachers and coaches get really tired of having to fundraise all the time.

- The community doesn't understand that there are different money funds (capitol versus operating). When the district put rocks on the auditorium, people were mad because it wasn't spent on books.
- The transportation bond was passed because a bus broke down on several trips over the years.

FACILITIES

- The football field is across town. There is no locker room there. Teams change at the school and then get bused to the field. At halftime, the teams huddle on the bus and team members have to stand in line for the bathroom with the crowd watching the game.
- We have tried to pass a bond for a new gymnasium (one at the end of the HS hallway) and the land owners just won't let it pass. However, we are the lowest property tax area around. It's frustrating.
- If we don't invest in our school facilities, we are going to die as a district.
- The Wildcat Pride room is used by community groups (quilters). Gym and auditorium are also used by community groups.
- It would be great if we could put all the schools in one site.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Discipline in the high school needs improvement.
- Drugs are a problem here. Marijuana is the most common. Meth is a problem, but has gotten better. There is some prescription drug abuse. Underage drinking has been a long-term problem in this district.
- We do random drug tests here, once a year. It's expensive.
- Last year a student stored another student's urine in his mouth in an attempt to pass a drug test.
- Discipline problems are rooted in home problems.
- If students fail a drug test, they are banned from all extracurriculars, not just sports. Students must undergo some counseling program then pass another drug test, paid for by the student.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Child Nutrition

- A favorite is tomato soup.
- Kids eat at the cafeteria because many parents won't pack a lunch for them.

- No complaints from most kids.
- Better this year than last year.
- Cafeteria is clean.

Technology

- Wi-Fi could be better.
- The replacement contract that parents signed required a payment that was more than the worth of the computer.
- At one point, the policy was that if a kid couldn't afford to pay the repair fee, they were not given a replacement.
- There have been issues in scheduling the computer lab shared by the K-2 building.
- All the computers need to be upgraded.
- Teachers don't allow kids to touch the SMART Boards.
- Kids may not be getting as much technology here as they could be getting at other districts.

Transportation

- It is great that we got new vehicles.
- The buses only pick up the rural kids. The in-town kids are not provided bus transportation.

If you could improve one thing, what would it be?

- We're a small district and that's a pro and a con. One of the limitations is that there are always cuts in funding. Had to eliminate band for a while due to the lack of money.

Appendix E:
Resources Referenced in Chapter 2

Audit



Professional Learning Communities:
source materials for school leaders and
other leaders of professional learning

Deciding where you are as a professional learning community

Louise Stoll, Ray Bolam, Agnes McMahon, Sally Thomas, Mike Wallace,
Angela Greenwood and Kate Hawkey

What is an implementation rubric?

Rubrics are usually used as assessment tools to measure pupils' work. They are scoring guides that don't depend on a numerical score. Instead, they list a full range of criteria or elements to assess a particular piece of work or performance. They describe varying degrees of quality

for each element, increasing from left to right. A benefit of rubrics is that they provide signposts to where you can get to as a result of development, and pointers to next steps that might be taken when trying to develop particular activities.

What is the purpose of this rubric?

This implementation rubric helps you see where colleagues think you are as a professional learning community (PLC) as they reflect on different criteria related to specific characteristics and processes of PLCs. The 12 topics down the left-hand side are the eight characteristics and four developmental processes of PLCs we identified in our study. For each of these, a number of key descriptors are mapped out horizontally, showing the development of each through four phases of their journey, highlighted at the top of the four columns. These range

from what might be happening when you are starting on the journey to develop a PLC to action taken when the PLC is self-sustaining:

Starting out; acquiring information and beginning to use ideas.
Developing; experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment.
Deepening; well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits.
Sustaining; introducing new developments, re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life.

How might you use the rubric?

You might choose to use the rubric in a range of ways. For example:

- individual staff members complete the rubric privately and give it to a designated person or team who collate(s) responses and feed(s) these back to the staff for discussion
- individual staff members complete the rubric before sharing and discussing their responses with each other
- small groups complete the rubric together and then compare and summarise their responses

The rubric on pages 3–9 and summary response sheet on page 10 can be photocopied for circulation. Each person completing the rubric needs to look at the descriptors, perhaps highlighting comments that represent your PLC. They can then decide which phase best

represents the PLC's current position, either highlighting the appropriate box in the table or marking the box in the blank response sheet included after the rubric. There is also a space labelled 'How do you know?' where people can note down evidence.

Looking through individual highlighted responses can help you see trends and patterns as well as differences in opinion. You can prepare a summary sheet of all the responses using the blank summary response sheet.

At the end of the activity, you will find some questions to discuss once you have pulled together the results.

The process can be repeated each year. You can look at changes people think have occurred and discuss the reasons for these changes.

Professional learning community implementation rubric



PLC characteristics

Starting out

Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas

Developing

Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment

Deepening

Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits

Sustaining

Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life

Shared values and vision

Staff have diverse values related to educational issues. They are beginning to recognise the need to attend to some PLC-wide issues. There are initial discussions about these issues.

Some smaller groups (PLCs) within the staff may share values about education and leadership.

An increasing number of staff share educational values, and participate actively in discussions about vision and values.

Shared educational vision is often stronger and more apparent in particular sections or departments of the PLC.



Educational values and vision are fairly widely shared throughout the PLC and generally demonstrated through practice.



The vision is revisited regularly and commitment to whole-school, centre or college-wide professional values is increasing.

Educational values and vision are widely shared throughout the PLC, regularly revisited and revised as appropriate by the whole staff, and demonstrated through practice.

There is a high degree of commitment to whole-school, centre or college-wide professional values and a strong sense of cohesion and consistency of approach.

How do you know this?

PLC characteristics	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
<p>Collective responsibility</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>Staff do not feel a sense of whole-school, centre or college-wide shared responsibility for <i>all</i> pupils.</p> <p>Some smaller groups, particularly those with common teaching or support responsibilities, feel a sense of shared responsibility.</p> <p>There are few whole-school, centre or college discussions about learning, progress, development and successes of pupils.</p>	<p>Some staff members feel a sense of collective responsibility for <i>all</i> pupils in the school, centre or college.</p> <p>Smaller groups (PLCs) feel a sense of shared responsibility for <i>all</i> pupils within their subject, year, key stage or phase.</p> <p>There are some whole-school, centre or college discussions about pupils' learning, progress, development and successes.</p>	<p>There is a growing sense of collective responsibility throughout the school, centre or college for the learning, progress, development and success of <i>all</i> pupils.</p> <p>Discussions of learning, progress, development and success of individual pupils.</p>	<p>A desire to do the best for all pupils pervades the school, centre or college.</p> <p>There is regular and deep whole-school, centre or college dialogue about learning, progress, development and successes of individual pupils.</p> 
<p>Learning-focused collaboration</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>Many staff mainly work in isolation. They focus on their own goals, value self-reliance and rarely share practices and strategies.</p> <p>Some smaller groups or departments collaborate and share learning and teaching and support strategies.</p>	<p>Some staff work together across the PLC, with joint planning, sharing strategies, and engaging in whole-school, centre or college-wide projects.</p> <p>Some support staff or care workers and teaching staff collaborate closely but this is not a common feature.</p>	<p>Staff increasingly plan together, collaborate and share ideas through meetings, website resources, team teaching etc.</p> <p>There are examples of productive teamwork between teachers and support staff.</p>	<p>Collaborative planning of learning and teaching activities is taken for granted.</p> <p>Sharing of ideas and strategies and joint problem-solving are widespread.</p> <p>Teamwork involving teachers and support or care staff is widespread.</p> 

PLC characteristics	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
<p>Existence of professional learning</p>	<p>Professional learning mainly consists of formal, short courses and whole-school, centre or college in-service training. Take-up is largely based on individual interest. Enthusiasm for whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences is limited. There are few work-based professional learning opportunities eg peer observation, coaching etc. There is mainly ad hoc talk about learning from external courses and visits.</p>	<p>A considerable number of staff are engaged in a variety of professional learning opportunities based on individual interest (eg courses, higher degrees etc) and increasingly this is also linked to school, centre or college aims. An increasing number of staff participate enthusiastically in whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences. Staff feed back on their learning to smaller groups and, sometimes, the whole staff.</p>	<p>Staff are generally interested in a diverse range of individual and group opportunities to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. Many staff participate enthusiastically in whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences. Staff generally feed back their learning to the whole staff.</p>	<p>All staff are enthusiastically involved in a diverse range of individual, group and whole-school, centre or college professional learning experiences. The school, centre or college as a workplace is seen as an important site for learning by all staff. Staff devote effort and energy into incorporating valuable new strategies into their practice. Learning is widely shared across the whole staff.</p> 
<p>How do you know this?</p>				
<p>Reflective professional enquiry</p>	<p>There is little reflection on, or enquiry into, practice. Data collection and the use of learning and teaching practice are limited. Data may be seen as an end in itself and often as someone else's problem.</p>	<p>Some staff are involved in activities to investigate and improve learning and teaching, eg peer observation and coaching, action research, review and moderation of pupils' work etc. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are variable across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>Many staff are actively involved and show increasing confidence about using different methods to explore and improve learning and teaching. Data collection and the use of data to inform and develop learning and teaching are increasingly consistent across the school, centre or college.</p>	<p>A questioning orientation to practice and 'need to know how we are doing and how we can improve' is pervasive. Staff confidently use a wide range of methods to investigate learning and teaching, using findings to inform and develop their practice. Data are collected, analysed and used to support this process.</p> 
<p>How do you know this?</p>				

<p>PLC characteristics</p>	<p>Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i></p>	<p>Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i></p>	<p>Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i></p>	<p>Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i></p>
<p>Openness, networks and partnerships</p>	<p>There is very little professional contact outside the school, centre or college.</p> <p>External networks and partnerships are limited, as is the seeking of external ideas and strategies.</p> <p>The school, centre or college is relatively isolated from its community.</p>	<p>Some staff are interested and engaged in networks and activities beyond the school, centre or college as a source of generating and sharing ideas and strategies.</p> <p>There is some involvement with the community.</p>	<p>External sources for generating and sharing ideas and strategies are generally perceived as valuable.</p> <p>Staff are increasingly taking up opportunities to become involved in networks and external partnerships. Some whole-school, centre or college networking is being explored.</p> <p>Community partnerships are generally welcomed and positive.</p>	<p>Staff look beyond the school, centre or college for new ideas and strategies. External input is sought out and welcomed.</p> <p>Links with other schools, centres, colleges and external agencies are seen as valuable, productive and important.</p> <p>Many staff are involved in individual and school, centre or college-wide external networks.</p> <p>Community partnerships are thriving.</p>
<p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>Membership of the PLC is confined to a small group of teaching staff and some or all school leaders.</p> <p>Input of support staff is not invited.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is limited.</p>	<p>Classroom support staff are increasingly involved as active members of the PLC.</p> <p>Other support staff are less involved.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is generally welcomed.</p>	<p>Many support staff (teaching and other) participate as active members of the PLC.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is welcomed.</p>	<p>The PLC includes all members of staff.</p> <p>All support staff are highly valued members of the PLC.</p> <p>The whole-school, centre or college PLC draws people together from across the organisation.</p> <p>Parental, pupil and governor or school council member involvement is welcomed and encouraged.</p>
<p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>Membership of the PLC is confined to a small group of teaching staff and some or all school leaders.</p> <p>Input of support staff is not invited.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is limited.</p>	<p>Classroom support staff are increasingly involved as active members of the PLC.</p> <p>Other support staff are less involved.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is generally welcomed.</p>	<p>Many support staff (teaching and other) participate as active members of the PLC.</p> <p>Parental and governor or school council member involvement is welcomed.</p>	<p>The PLC includes all members of staff.</p> <p>All support staff are highly valued members of the PLC.</p> <p>The whole-school, centre or college PLC draws people together from across the organisation.</p> <p>Parental, pupil and governor or school council member involvement is welcomed and encouraged.</p>



PLC characteristics	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
Mutual trust, respect and support	<p>Staff relationships highlight issues around trust and conflict.</p> <p>A blame culture may exist.</p> <p>Trust and respect exists among some members of smaller groups or departments.</p> <p>Development issues are viewed as a threat by a number of staff.</p>	<p>A moderate level of mutual trust exists school, centre or college-wide, with increasing mutual respect, although there is some anxiety about classroom observation etc.</p> <p>There is strong mutual trust and respect among some groups of staff who work closely together.</p>	<p>Trust, respect and positive professional relationships are developing school, centre or college-wide.</p> <p>Staff are increasingly open about their practice.</p>	<p>Staff relationships are characterised by openness, honesty, mutual trust, respect, support and care.</p> <p>Everyone's contribution is valued.</p>
<i>How do you know this?</i>				





PLC processes				
Optimising resources and structures	<p>There are few systems and policies in place to support the development of the PLC.</p> <p>Time, space, money and/or communication mechanisms tend to act as barriers.</p>	<p>Attention is paid to trying to put into place the necessary structures, systems and policies that will help support PLC development: creating time; locating space; planning communication mechanisms; use of meetings and other procedures; arranging staff deployment etc.</p>	<p>Most of the necessary structures, systems and policies are in place to support PLC development.</p> <p>Attention is paid to dealing with resource and structural issues that get in the way of PLC development.</p>	<p>Time, money, space, meetings, communication procedures and staff deployment are targeted as a priority to promote the ongoing development of the PLC.</p> <p>Resource and structural issues are dealt with swiftly and actively.</p>
<i>How do you know this?</i>				





<p>PLC processes</p>	<p>Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i></p>	<p>Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i></p>	<p>Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i></p>	<p>Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i></p>
<p>Promoting professional learning</p> <p><i>How do you know this?</i></p>	<p>An explicit needs identification process is rarely used, either for individual staff or whole-school, centre or college needs.</p> <p>Co-ordination responsibility for continuing professional development is unspecified or unclear.</p> <p>Information for staff mainly comprises details about courses and training days.</p>	<p>A needs identification process has been developed and is being used for staff and whole-school, centre or college professional learning needs.</p> <p>Continuous learning of all staff is increasingly promoted.</p> <p>Attention is paid to strengthening the co-ordination of professional learning.</p> <p>Performance management is starting to be used as a process to support the PLC's development.</p>	<p>Staff and whole-school, centre or college professional learning needs are clearly identified.</p> <p>Continuous learning of all staff is promoted and carefully co-ordinated. A range of opportunities is planned to enable staff to learn from and with each other and facilitate the transfer of new learning into practice.</p> <p>Performance management is used as a positive process to support the PLC's development.</p> <p>Some staff are encouraged to take responsibility in promoting the professional learning of colleagues.</p>	<p>Staff and whole-school, centre or college professional learning needs are regularly and consistently identified.</p> <p>Continuous professional learning and development for all staff is actively promoted and carefully co-ordinated.</p> <p>Attention is paid to ensure that new learning is transferred into practice.</p> <p>Opportunities are automatically planned to ensure staff can learn with and from each other.</p> <p>Staff are actively encouraged to take responsibility in promoting the professional learning of colleagues.</p>

PLC processes	Starting out <i>Acquiring information and beginning to use ideas</i>	Developing <i>Experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment</i>	Deepening <i>Well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits</i>	Sustaining <i>Introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life</i>
<p>Evaluating and sustaining the PLC</p> <p><i>How do we know this</i></p>	<p>There is little or no discussion about the concept of a PLC.</p> <p>There is little evaluation of how the process of the PLC operates or how its development progresses.</p> <p>There is little evaluation of continuing professional development's (CPD's) impact or of other PLC activities.</p>	<p>The idea of a PLC is introduced to staff.</p> <p>There is occasional evaluation of how the process of the PLC operates or how its development progresses.</p> <p>There is some evaluation of CPD's impact and of other PLC activities.</p>	<p>The PLC is consciously and actively developed.</p> <p>There is regular evaluation of how the process of the PLC operates or how its development progresses.</p> <p>CPD's impact on practice is evaluated, as are many other PLC activities.</p>	<p>Being a PLC is just 'part of the way we do things here'.</p> <p>People understand and support the idea of a PLC.</p> <p>Regular attention is given to evaluating the process, progress and impact of the PLC and all of its activities, including CPD.</p> 
<p>Leading and managing to promote the PLC</p> <p><i>How do we know this</i></p>	<p>The headteacher (principal) works to build trust and begins to develop and share a learning vision and focus.</p> <p>Senior leadership team members are encouraged to participate in PLC leadership.</p> <p>Few other staff are involved in leading any PLC activities.</p>	<p>Attention is given by senior leaders to developing and spreading a learning vision and focus and building trust.</p> <p>Senior leaders model teamwork and leadership of learning.</p> <p>Other staff are involved in leading some PLC activities.</p>	<p>Senior leaders maintain their attention to developing and spreading a learning vision and focus and building trust.</p> <p>Senior leaders model learning.</p> <p>Leadership for different PLC activities is increasingly taken up by other staff.</p>	<p>Senior leaders are deeply committed to the development and sustainability of the school's PLC and prioritise this as a major leadership and management task.</p> <p>Distributing leadership among staff is an accepted practice.</p> 

Summary response sheet

	Starting out	Developing	Deepening	Sustaining
Shared values and vision				
Collective responsibility				
Learning-focused collaboration				
Existence of professional learning				
Reflective professional enquiry				
Openness, networks and partnerships				
Inclusive membership				
Mutual trust, respect and support				
Optimising resources and structures				
Promoting professional learning				
Evaluating and sustaining the PLC				
Leading and managing to promote the PLC				

You can use this sheet to: a) mark down individual responses to the implementation rubric;
b) summarise all of the responses of individuals.



Questions for reflection and discussion



What did you notice as you were completing the rubric?

Which are the characteristics and processes, or aspects of these, where you feel you have progressed furthest along the route? What factors seem to have helped you?

Which are the characteristics and processes, or aspects of these, where you feel progression has been slower? What seems to have been holding back the PLC's development in these areas?

How will you move forward with this information? (You may also find it helpful to use *Investigating the culture of your professional learning community*, another *Audit* activity, to gather some different kinds of data. Alternatively, the *Planning* and *Action* materials may offer some ideas about next steps.)



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Audit

Investigating the culture of your professional learning community
Comparing your preferred future and the current situation in your
professional learning community

Deciding where you are as a professional learning community

National College for School Leadership

Triumph Road
Nottingham NG8 1DH

T: 0870 001 1155
F: 0115 872 2001
E: nlc@ncsl.org.uk
W: www.ncsl.org.uk/nlc

General Teaching Council for England

Whittington House
19-30 Alfred Place
London WC1E 7EA

T: 0870 001 0308
F: 020 7023 3909
E: info@gtce.org.uk
W: www.gtce.org.uk

DfES Innovation Unit

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

T: 0870 000 2288
E: innovation.unit@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
W: www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/innovation-unit

Effective Professional Learning Communities

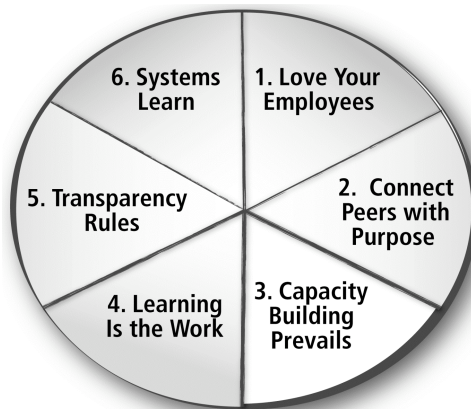
University of Bristol
Graduate School of Education
8-10 Berkeley Square
Bristol
BS8 1HH

W: www.eplc.info

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

MICHAEL FULLAN

The Six Secrets of Change



— Fullan, 2008a

Learning to Lead Change

The Pathways Problem



What is Change?

- New materials
- New behaviors/practices
- New beliefs/understanding

The Implementation Dip



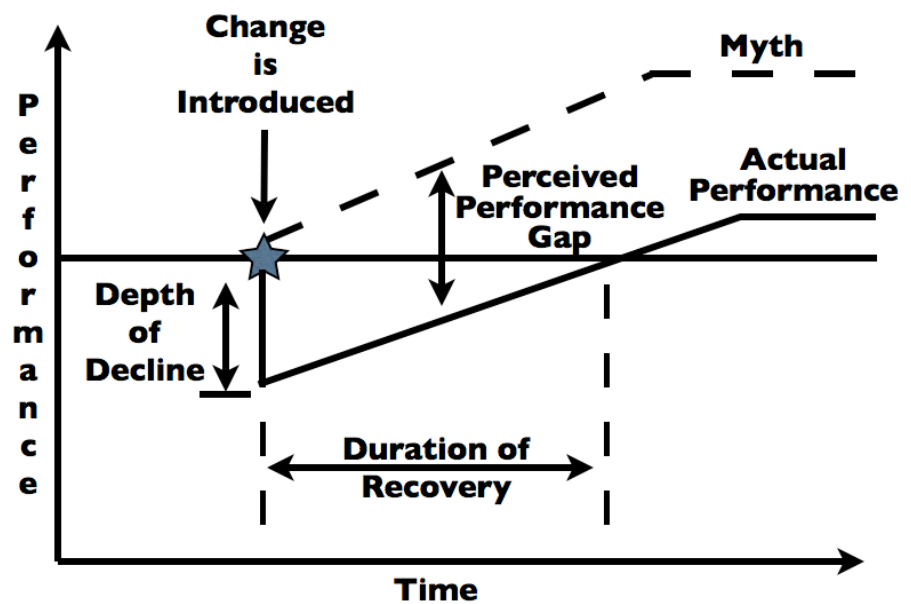
education in motion

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

Change Insights

- The implementation dip is normal
- Behaviors change before beliefs
- The size and prettiness of the planning document is inversely related to the quantity of action and student learning (Reeves, 2002)
- Shared vision or ownership is more of an outcome of a quality process than it is a precondition
- Feelings are more influential than thoughts (Kotter, 2008)

Implementation



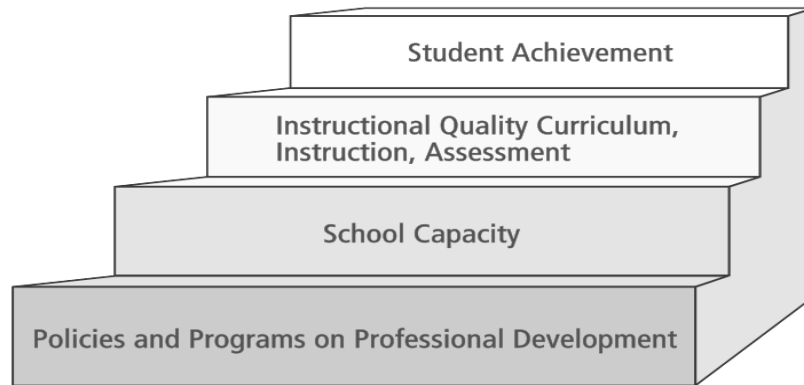
Change Savvy

Change savvy leadership involves:

- Careful entry into the new setting
- Listening to and learning from those who have been there longer
- Engage in fact finding and joint problem solving
- Carefully (rather than rashly) diagnosing the situation
- Forthrightly addressing people's concerns
- Being enthusiastic, genuine and sincere about the change circumstances
- Obtaining buy-in for what needs fixing
- Developing a credible plan for making that fix

— Herold & Fedor, 2008

Influences on School Capacity and School Student Achievement



— *Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000*

School Capacity

The collective power of the full staff to improve student achievement.

School capacity includes and requires:

1. Knowledge, skills, dispositions of individuals
2. Professional community
3. Program coherence
4. Technical resources
5. Shared leadership

— *Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000*

What is Collaboration?

A systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results.

— *Dufour, Dufour, & Eaker, 2002*

Tri-Level Reform



— *Fullan, 2005*

Secret One: Love your Employees

Explore the importance of building the school by focusing on both the teachers and staff, and students and the community. The key is enabling staff to learn continuously. Evidence will be provided from successful business companies as well as from education.

Theory X Assumptions

- The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he or she can.
- Because of their dislike for work, most people must be controlled and threatened before they will work hard enough.
- The average human prefers to be directed, dislikes responsibility, is unambiguous, and desires security above everything else.

— *McGregor, 1960*

Theory Y Assumptions

- If a job is satisfying, then the result will be commitment to the organization.
- The average person learns under proper conditions not only to accept but to seek responsibility.
- Imagination, creativity, and ingenuity can be used to solve work problems by a large number of employees.

— *McGregor, 1960*

Dimensions of Relational Coordination

Relationships	American	Southwest
Shared goals	"Ninety percent of the ramp employees don't care what happens, even if the walls fall down, as long as they get their check."	"I've never seen so many people work so hard to do one thing. You see people checking their watches to get the on-time departure ... then it's over and you're back on time."
Shared knowledge	Participants revealed little awareness of the overall process. They typically explained their own set of tasks without reference to the overall process of flight departures.	Participants exhibited relatively clear mental models of the overall process — an understanding of the links between their own jobs and the jobs of other functions. Rather than just knowing what to do, they knew why, based on shared knowledge of how the overall process worked.
Mutual respect	"There are employees working here who think they're better than other employees. Gate and ticket agents think they're better than the ramp. The ramp think they're better than cabin cleaners — think it's a sissy, woman's job. Then the cabin cleaners look down on the building cleaners. The mechanics think the ramp are a bunch of luggage handlers.	"No one takes the job of another person for granted. The skycap is just as critical as the pilot. You can always count on the next guy standing there. No one department is any more important than another."

Communications

Frequent and timely communication	"Here you don't communicate. And sometimes you end up not knowing things ... Everyone says we need effective communication. But it's a low priority in action ... The hardest thing at the gates when flights are delayed is to get information."	"There is constant communication between customer service and the ramp. When planes have to be switched and bags must be moved, customer service will advise the ramp directly or through operations." If there's an aircraft swap "operations keeps everyone informed. ... It happens smoothly."
Problem-solving communication	"If you ask anyone here, what's the last thing you think of when there's a problem, I bet your bottom dollar it's the customer. And these are guys who work hard every day. But they're thinking, how do I keep my ass out of the sling?"	"We figure out the cause of the delay. We do not necessarily chastise, though sometimes that comes into play. It is a matter of working together. Figuring out what we can learn. Not finger pointing."

— Gittel, 2003

Motivational Work

- Meaningful, accomplishable work
- Enabling development
- Sense of camaraderie
- Being well led

Characteristics of Firms of Endearment (FoEs)

What we call a humanistic company is run in such a way that its stakeholders — customers, employees, suppliers, business partners, society, and many investors — develop an emotional connection with it, an affectionate regard not unlike the way many people feel about their favourite sports teams. Humanistic companies — or firms of endearment (FoEs) — seek to maximize their value to society as a whole, not just to their shareholders. They are the ultimate value creators: They create emotional value, experiential value, social value, and of course, financial value. People who interact with such companies feel safe, secure, and pleased in their dealings. They enjoy working with or for the company, buying from it, investing in it, and having it as a neighbour.

— *Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2007*

FoEs Performance

- Over a ten-year horizon, FoEs outperformed the *Good to Great* companies: 1,026 percent return versus 331 percent (a 3-to-1 ratio).
- Over five years, FoEs returned 128 percent, compared to 77 percent by the *Good to Great* companies (a 1.7-to-1 ratio).

— *Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2007*

Reflection on Content: (Three-Person-Interview)

In groups of three discuss the following questions:

1. Who are your stakeholders?
2. What does your organization believe in and stand for?
3. What conditions do you need to create a Theory Y (FoE) environment?

Worksheet

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

Secret Two: Connect Peers with Purpose

Purposeful peer interaction within the school is crucial. Student learning and achievement increase substantially when teachers work in learning communities supported by school leaders who focus on improvement.

Jersey Video

| Why is this a positive example of teaching connecting with peers?

Knowledge Sharing

| Literacy Learning Fair

Learning Fair Outcomes

- Forces schools to explain themselves
- Time for celebrating the work of the year
- Learn new ideas from other schools
- Friendly competition to outdo each other
- Fosters district identity

Results of Connecting

- Knowledge flows as people pursue and continuously learn what works best
- Identity with an entity larger than oneself expands the self into powerful consequences.

— Fullan, 2008a

We-We Commitment

| What are your two best strategies for connecting peers?

Secret Three: Capacity Building Prevails

The most effective strategies involve helping teachers and principals develop the instructional and management of change skills necessary for school improvement. The role of assessment for learning is essential in order to link data on learning to instructional practices that achieve student results.

Capacity Building | Capacity building concerns competencies, resources, and motivation. Individuals and groups are high on capacity if they possess and continue to develop these three components in concert.
— Fullan, 2008a

Judgmentalism | Judgmentalism is not just perceiving something as ineffective, but doing so in a pejorative and negative way.
— Fullan, 2008a

Non-Judgmentalism | Focused on improvement in the face of ineffective performance rather than labeling or categorizing weaknesses.
— Fullan, 2008a

Fear Prevents Acting on Knowledge | When people fear for their jobs or their reputation it is unlikely that they will take risks. Fear causes a focus on the short-term to neglect of the mid or longer term. Fear creates a focus on the individual rather than the group. Teamwork suffers.

Lincoln on Temperance | Assume to dictate to his judgment, or command his action, or mark him to be one to be shunned and despised, and he will retreat within himself, close all avenues to his head and his heart; and tho your cause be naked truth itself, transformed to the heaviest lance harder than steel can be made, and tho you throw it with more than Herculean force and precision, you shall no more be able to pierce him than to penetrate the hard shell of a tortoise with a rye straw.
— Quoted in Miller, 2002, pp. 148-149

Lincoln on Slavery | We can succeed only in concert. It is not 'can any of us imagine better', but 'can we all do better.'
— Quoted in Miller, 2002, pp. 224; italics in original

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

Judgmentalism

Is it possible to perceive something as ineffective and not be judgmental about it?

Letter off A, B

- Pick any of the four quadrants that represents a situation that you have experienced
- Make a few notations within the quadrant
- Do a two-step interview with your partner A, B

FEELING	FEEDBACK	
	Indirect	Direct
Belittled		
Not Belittled		

As a leader...

- Practice non-judgmentalism when you are giving feedback
- Practice non-defensiveness when you are receiving feedback

Capacity Building

People who thrive here have a certain humility. They know they can get better; they want to learn from the best. We look for people who light up when they are around other talented people.

— Taylor & LaBarre, 2002

Secret Four: Learning Is the Work

Professional development (PD) in workshops and courses is only an input to continuous learning and precision in teaching. Successful growth itself is accomplished when the culture of the school supports day-to-day learning of teachers engaged in improving what they do in the classroom and school.

Culture of Learning

If we were to identify the single greatest difference between Toyota and other organizations (including service, healthcare, and manufacturing), it would be the depth of understanding among Toyota employees regarding their work.

— Liker & Meier, 2007

Toyota's Approach

The essence of Toyota's approach to improving performance consists of three components:

1. Identify critical knowledge
2. Transfer knowledge using job instruction
3. Verify learning and success

— Liker & Meier, 2007

Breakthrough



— Fullan, Hill, & Crévola, 2006

The Container Store

The Container Store provides 235 hours of training to first-year employees and 160 hours every year thereafter, all with a view to creating a culture where people learn from experience.

— Sisodia, Wolfe, & Sheth, 2007

Non-Judgmentalism ... Again

The objective is not to identify whom to blame for a problem, it is to find out where the system failed.

— Liker & Meier, 2007

Secret Five: Transparency Rules

Ongoing data and access to seeing effective practices is necessary for success. It takes up the dilemmas of 'de-privatizing practice' in which it becomes normal and desirable for teachers to observe and be observed in teaching facilitated by coaches and mentors.

Getting Started with Transparency

Data walls — elementary teachers
Data walls — high school teachers

— *Liker & Meier, 2007*

Medicine

To fix medicine we need to do two things: measure ourselves, and be open about what we are doing.

— *Gawande, 2007*

Classroom Improvement

Transparency + non-judgmentalism + good help = classroom improvement

— *Fullan, 2008a*

Statistical Neighbors

As part of the overall strategy, Ontario created a new database, which is called “Statistical Neighbors.” All four thousand schools are in the system. They are organized into four bands — students and schools from the most disadvantaged communities, two bands in the middle, and a fourth comprising students in the least disadvantaged communities. Schools can be examined using other categories as well — size of school, percentage of ESL students, geographical setting (rural or urban), and so on.

We are now in a position to use the data, and here is where the nuance of Secret Five comes into play. Simply publishing the results can possibly do some good, but more likely than not would have negative side effects. Instead we operate under a set of ground rules:

1. We do not condone league tables — displaying the results of every school from lowest to highest scores without regard to context. Instead we do the following:
 - a. Help schools compare themselves with themselves — that is, look at what progress they are making compared to previous years;
 - b. Help schools compare themselves with their statistical neighbors, comparing apples with apples;
 - c. Help schools examine their results relative to an external or absolute standard, such as how other schools in the province are faring and how close they are to achieving 100 percent success in literacy and numeracy.
2. We work with the seventy-two school districts and their four thousand schools to set annual “aspirational targets” based on their current starting point.
3. We focus on capacity building, helping districts identify and use effective instructional practices.
4. Although we take each year’s results seriously, we are cautious about drawing conclusions about any particular school based on just one year’s results. We prefer to examine three-year trends to determine if schools or districts are “stuck” or “moving” (improving or declining).
5. For schools and districts that are continuing to under-perform, we intervene with a program called Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP), which provides targeted help designed to improve performance. There are currently about 850 of the 4,000 schools in this program. We are careful not to stigmatize schools in OFIP (in keeping with Secret Three), because doing so gets people sidetracked into issues of blame.

Overall, we think that this approach to data-informed development is effective. There is quite a lot of pressure built into the process, but that pressure is based on constructive transparency. When data are precise, presented in a non-judgmental way, considered by peers, and used for improvement as well as for external accountability, they serve to balance pressure and support. This approach seems to work. After five years of flatlined results before beginning the program (1999 – 2003), the province’s literacy and numeracy scores have climbed by some ten percentage points, with OFIP schools improving more than the average.

In England, schools and LAs can also track their performance through a data system called RAISE in which they can trace their performance over time.

— Fullan, 2008a

Secret Six: Systems Learn

Continuous learning depends on developing many leaders in the school in order to enhance continuity. It also depends on schools being confident in the face of complexity, and open to new ideas.

Systems Learn

The fact that Toyota can succeed over decades ... and that the company shows no "leadership effects" — or changes from succession — speaks to building a robust set of interrelated management practices and philosophies that provide advantage above and beyond the ideas or inspirations of single individuals.

— *Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006*

Certainty

Some people I've encountered seem more certain about everything than I am about anything.

— *Rubin, 2003*

Wisdom

Wisdom is using your knowledge while doubting what you know.

— *Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006*

Leaders ...

... Have to be more confident than the situation warrants. They have to develop leadership in others. Be specific about the few things that matter and keep repeating them.

— *Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006*

Systems Learning

Confidence but not certitude in the face of complexity. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

— *Fullan, 2008a*

Leadership

Shackleton Video

What evidence did you see of Shackleton's leadership style?

Scott

- Ambitious
- Naïve technically
- Hierarchical
- Arrogant
- Wary of colleagues more able than himself
- Indifferent selector
- Poor trainer
- Bad safety record
- Gifted writer

Shackleton

- Single-minded
- Excellent in crisis
- Technically sensible
- Gregarious
- Excellent public speaker
- Broadly objective
- Good conceptual planner
- Effective selector and trainer
- Good safety record
- Bored by administration
- Politically astute

— *Morrel & Capparell, 2001*

On Leadership ... Scott was dour, bullying and controlling; Shackleton was warm, humorous and egalitarian ... Scott tried to orchestrate every movement of his men; Shackleton gave his men responsibility and some measure of independence. Scott was secretive and untrusting; Shackleton talked openly and frankly with the men about all aspects of the work. Scott put his team at risk to achieve his goals; Shackleton valued his men's lives above all else.

Scott's men died. All of Shackleton's men survived the wreck of their ship, *Endurance* in the crushing Antarctic ice, stranded twelve thousand miles from civilization with no means of communication. Isolated for almost two years on an Antarctic ice flow, Shackleton and a few of his men endured an eight-hundred-mile trip across the frigid south Atlantic in little more than a rowboat to get help for his men. All twenty-seven men in the crew survived in good health.

— *Morrel & Capparell, 2001*

Shackleton's Leadership Traits:

- Cultivate a sense of compassion and responsibility for others.
- Once you commit, stick through the tough learning period.
- Do your part to help create an upbeat environment at work — important for productivity.
- Broaden your cultural and social horizons, learning to see things from different perspectives.
- In a rapidly changing world, be willing to venture in new directions to seize new opportunities and learn new skills.
- Find a way to turn setbacks and failures to your own advantage.
- Be bold in vision and careful in planning.
- Learn from past mistakes.
- Never insist on reaching a goal at any cost; it must be achieved without undue hardship for your staff.

— *Morrel & Capparell, 2001*

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE

**What's Worth Fighting
for in the Principalship:
Guidelines for Principals**

1. De-privatize teaching
2. Model instructional leadership
3. Build capacity first
4. Grow other leaders
5. Divert the distractors
6. Be a system leader

— Fullan, 2008

**What's Worth Fighting
for in the Principalship:
Guidelines for Systems**

1. Invest in the instructional leadership of principals
2. Combine direction and flexibility
3. Mobilize the power of data
4. Use peers to change district culture
5. Address the managerial requirements
6. Stay the course

— Fullan, 2008

Leadership Therapy

A. Rowley, 2007

The Leadership Circumplex

The circumplex is based upon two related dimensions of leadership behavior — conviction and connection.

Conviction measures the following behaviors:

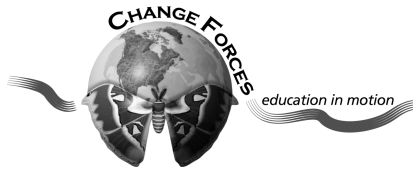
- The ability to provide a compelling vision;
- The capacity to manage or lead change;
- Reality sense — the ability to grasp what is happening in the industry and a commitment to understanding and servicing the needs of the customer;
- The capacity to display passion, conviction, belief and authenticity; and
- A commitment to continuous learning.

Connection measures the following:

- Self-awareness — an understanding of how your behavior affects others and how to change it according to the person/situation;
- Effective communication — you demonstrate a sense of power and competence through communication;
- Developing people — you put developing people as a priority and ensure that people have personal development plans; and
- The capacity to revitalize the business values

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THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE



Michael Fullan is the former Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Recognized as an international authority on educational reform, Michael is engaged in training, consulting, and evaluating change projects around the world. His ideas for managing change are used in many countries, and his

books have been published in many languages.

Michael Fullan led the evaluation team which conducted the four-year assessment of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in England from 1998-2003. In April 2004 he was appointed Special Advisor to the Premier and Minister of Education in Ontario.

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RTI Fidelity of Implementation Rubric

The Response to Intervention (RTI) Fidelity Rubric is for use by individuals who are responsible for monitoring school-level fidelity of RTI implementation. The rubric is aligned with the essential components of RTI and the infrastructure that is necessary for successful implementation. It is accompanied by a worksheet with guiding questions and score points for use in an interview with a school’s RTI leadership team.

<i>Assessments—Screening, progress monitoring, and other supporting assessments are used to inform data-based decision making.</i>			
Measures	1	3	5
<i>Screening—The RTI framework accurately identifies students at risk of poor learning outcomes or challenging behaviors.</i>			
Screening Tools	Insufficient evidence that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate.	Evidence indicates that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate, but staff is unable to articulate the supporting evidence.	Evidence indicates that the screening tools are reliable, correlations between the instruments and valued outcomes are strong, and predictions of risk status are accurate, and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Universal Screening	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).	All of the following conditions are met: (1) screening is conducted for all students (i.e., is universal); (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., all students are tested, scores are accurate, cut points/decisions are accurate); and (3) a process to screen all students occurs more than once per year (e.g., fall, winter, spring).
Data Points to Verify Risk	Screening data are not used or are used alone to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.	Screening data are used in concert with at least one other data source (e.g., classroom performance, curriculum-based assessment, performance on state	Screening data are used in concert with at least two other data sources (e.g., classroom performance, performance on state assessments, diagnostic assessment

		assessments, diagnostic assessment data, short-term progress monitoring) to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.	data, short-term progress monitoring) to verify decisions about whether a student is or is not at risk.
Progress Monitoring —Ongoing and frequent monitoring of progress quantifies rates of improvement and informs instructional practice and the development of individualized programs. Measures are appropriate for the student’s grade and/or skill level.			
Progress-Monitoring Tools	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet no more than one of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available.	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet two or three of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available.	Selected progress-monitoring tools meet all of the following criteria: (1) have sufficient number of alternate forms of equal and controlled difficulty to allow for progress monitoring at recommended intervals based on intervention level; (2) specify minimum acceptable growth; (3) provide benchmarks for minimum acceptable end-of-year performance; and (4) reliability and validity information for the performance-level score is available and staff is able to articulate the supporting evidence.
Progress-Monitoring Process	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) progress monitoring occurs at least monthly for students receiving secondary-level intervention and at least weekly for students receiving intensive intervention; and (2) procedures are in place to ensure implementation accuracy (i.e., appropriate students are tested, scores are accurate, decision-making rules are applied consistently).

Data-Based Decision Making—Data-based decision-making processes are used to inform instruction, movement within the multilevel system, and disability identification (in accordance with state law).

Measures	1	3	5
Decision-Making Process	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/ intervention levels meets no more than one of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/ intervention levels meets two of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).	The mechanism for making decisions about the participation of students in the instruction/intervention levels meets all of the following criteria: The process (1) is data-driven and based on validated methods; (2) involves a broad base of stakeholders; and (3) is operationalized with clear, established decision rules (e.g., movement between levels or tiers, determination of appropriate instruction or interventions).
Data System	A data system is in place that meets two or fewer of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student- level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.	A data system is in place that meets three of the following four conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.	A data system is in place that meets all of the following conditions: (1) the system allows users to document and access individual student-level data (including screening and progress-monitoring data) and instructional decisions; (2) data are entered in a timely manner; (3) data can be represented graphically; and (4) there is a process for setting/evaluating goals.
Responsiveness to Secondary and Intensive Levels of Intervention	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) decisions about responsiveness to intervention are based on reliable and valid progress-monitoring data that reflect slope of improvement or progress toward the attainment of a goal at the end of the intervention; and (2) these decision-making criteria are implemented accurately.

Multilevel Instruction—The RTI framework includes a school-wide, multilevel system of instruction and interventions for preventing school failure. Commonly represented by the three-tiered triangle, multilevel instruction also is known as the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

Measures	1	3	5
Primary-Level Instruction/Core Curriculum (Tier I)			
Research-Based Curriculum Materials	Few core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups).	Some core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups).	All core curriculum materials are research based for the target population of learners (including subgroups).
Articulation of Teaching and Learning (in and across grade levels)	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning is well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning is well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) teaching and learning objectives are well articulated from one grade to another; and (2) teaching and learning is well articulated within grade levels so that students have highly similar experiences, regardless of their assigned teacher.
Differentiated Instruction	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) interviewed staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) interviewed staff can explain how most teachers in the school use student data to identify and address the needs of students.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) interviewed staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) interviewed staff can explain how most teachers in the school use student data to identify and address the needs of students.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) interviewed staff can describe how most teachers in the school differentiate instruction for students on, below, or above grade level; and (2) interviewed staff can explain how most teachers in the school use data to identify and address the needs of students.
Standards-Based	The core curriculum (reading and mathematics) is not aligned with the Common Core or other state standards.	The core curriculum (reading and mathematics) is partially aligned with the Common Core or other state standards.	The core curriculum (reading and mathematics) is aligned with the Common Core or other state standards.

Exceeding Benchmark	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.	One of the following conditions is met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) the school provides enrichment opportunities for students exceeding benchmarks; and (2) teachers implement those opportunities consistently at all grade levels.
<i>Secondary-Level Intervention (Tier II)</i>			
Evidence-Based Intervention	Secondary-level interventions are not evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.	Some secondary-level interventions are evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.	All secondary-level interventions are evidence based in content areas and grade levels where they are available.
Complements Core Instruction	Secondary-level intervention is poorly aligned with core instruction and incorporates different topics, even though those topics are not foundational skills that support core program learning objectives.	Secondary-level intervention incorporates foundational skills, but these only occasionally align with the learning objectives of core instruction.	Secondary-level intervention is well aligned with core instruction and incorporates foundational skills that support the learning objectives of core instruction.
Instructional Characteristics	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) secondary-level interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) secondary-level interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	All three of the following conditions are met: (1) interventions are standardized; (2) secondary-level interventions are led by staff trained in the intervention according to developer requirements; and (3) group size and dosage are optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.
Addition to Primary	Secondary-level interventions replace core instruction.	Secondary-level interventions sometimes supplement core instruction and sometimes replace core instruction.	Secondary-level interventions supplement core instruction.

Intensive Intervention—Individualized with a focus on the academic needs of students with disabilities and those significantly below grade level (Tier III)			
Data-Based Interventions Adapted Based on Student Need	Intensive interventions are not more intensive (e.g., no increase in duration or frequency, change in interventionist, change in group size, or change in intervention) than secondary interventions.	Intensive interventions are more intensive than secondary interventions based only on preset methods to increase intensity (e.g., sole reliance on increased duration or frequency, change in interventionist, decreased group size, or change in intervention program).	Intensive interventions are more intensive than secondary interventions and are adapted to address individual student needs in a number of ways (e.g., increased duration or frequency, change in interventionist, decreased group size, change in instructional delivery, and change in type of intervention) through an iterative manner based on student data.
Instructional Characteristics	None of the following conditions is met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) the intervention is individualized; (2) intensive interventions are led by well-trained staff experienced in individualizing instruction based on student data; and (3) the group size is optimal (according to research) for the age and needs of students.
Relationship to Primary	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions are aligned to the specific skill needs of students to help them make progress toward core curriculum standards.	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) decisions regarding student participation in both core instruction and intensive intervention are made on a case-by-case basis, according to student need; and (2) intensive interventions address the general education curriculum in an appropriate manner for students.

Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms—*Knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of RTI in a unified system to meet the established goals.*

Measures	1	3	5
Prevention Focus	Staff generally perceives RTI as a program that solely supports the prereferral process for special education.	Some staff understand that RTI is a framework to prevent all students, including students with disabilities, from having academic problems.	All staff understand that RTI is a framework to prevent all students, including students with disabilities, from having academic problems.
Leadership Personnel	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders undermine the effectiveness of the essential components of the RTI framework at the school.	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders are inconsistent and only somewhat supportive of the essential components of the RTI framework at the school; support for RTI implementation is not very evident.	Decisions and actions by school and district leaders proactively support the essential components of the RTI framework at the school, and help make the RTI framework more effective; support for RTI implementation is a high priority.
School-Based Professional Development	The school has no well-defined, school-based professional development mechanism to support continuous improvement of instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions.	Some forms of school-based professional development are available, but most are not consistent or job embedded to ensure continuous improvement in instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions.	School-based professional development is institutionalized and structured so that all teachers continuously examine, reflect upon, and improve instructional practice, data-based decision making, and delivery of interventions.
Schedules	School wide schedules are not aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; inadequate time is available for interventions.	School wide schedules are partially aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; some additional time is built in for interventions.	School wide schedules are aligned to support multiple levels of intervention based on student need; adequate additional time is built in for interventions.
Resources	Resources (e.g., funds, programs) are not allocated to support RTI implementation.	Resources (e.g., funds, programs) are partially allocated to support RTI implementation.	Resources (e.g., funds, programs) are adequately allocated to support RTI implementation.
Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness	One or none of the following conditions is met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting	Two of the following conditions are met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting	All three of the following conditions are met: Staff can articulate information and factors that they consider when adopting

	culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.	culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.	culturally and linguistically relevant (1) instructional practices, (2) assessments, and (3) intervention programs.
Communications With and Involvement of Parents	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI is shared with parents; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating parents on the progress of their child who is receiving secondary or intensive interventions; and (3) parents are involved during decision making regarding the progress of students receiving intensive intervention.	Two of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI is shared with parents; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating parents on the progress of their child who is receiving secondary or intensive interventions; and (3) parents are involved during decision making regarding the progress of students receiving intensive intervention.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI is shared with parents; (2) a coherent mechanism is implemented for updating parents on the progress of their child who is receiving secondary or intensive interventions; and (3) parents are informed about decision making regarding the progress of students receiving intensive intervention.
Communication With and Involvement of All Staff	One or none of the following conditions is met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI and data-based decision- making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.	At least two of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI and data-based decision-making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) a description of the school’s essential components of RTI and data-based decision- making process is shared with staff; (2) a system is in place to keep staff informed; and (3) teacher teams collaborate frequently.
RTI Teams	Only one of the following conditions is met: (1) the RTI team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.	At least two of the following conditions are met: (1) the RTI team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) the RTI team is representative of all key stakeholders; (2) structures and clear processes are in place to guide decision making; and (3) time is set aside for the team to meet regularly.

Fidelity and Evaluation—System for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity and effectiveness of the RTI model.

Measures	1	3	5
Fidelity	Neither of the following conditions is met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum and secondary and intensive interventions; and (2) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.	One of the following conditions is met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum and secondary and intensive interventions; and (2) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.	Both of the following conditions are met: (1) procedures are in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum and secondary and intensive interventions; and (2) procedures are in place to monitor the processes of administering and analyzing assessments.
Evaluation	None of the following conditions are met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the RTI framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the RTI framework.	At least one of the following conditions is met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the RTI framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the RTI framework.	All of the following conditions are met: (1) an evaluation plan is in place to monitor short- and long-term goals; (2) student data are reviewed for all students and subgroups of students across the essential components to evaluate effectiveness of the RTI framework (i.e., core curriculum is effective, interventions are effective, screening process is effective); and (3) implementation data (e.g., walk-throughs) are reviewed to monitor fidelity and efficiency across all components of the RTI framework.

RTI Essential Components Worksheet

School: _____ District: _____ Date: _____

Person(s) Interviewed: _____

Interviewer(s): _____

Purpose:

The purpose of this worksheet is to provide a tool for collecting relevant information and for recording a school's rating on various items related to response to intervention (RTI) implementation. Descriptions of ratings for each item are provided on the RTI Essential Components Integrity Rubric (the Rubric).

Information about school-level implementation (Grades K–8) may be collected through interviews with school personnel and through observations and document review. After all of the information has been collected, use your notes and the Rubric to rate the school on each item. The Rubric provides a five-point rating scale and descriptions of practices that would score a 1, 3, or 5. Data collectors may assign the school a rating of 2 or 4 if the information collected suggests the school falls between the rubric descriptions. For example, if the reviewer judges a school to be performing at a level higher than the Rubric describes for a 3 rating but not quite at the level described for a 5, then the reviewer should rate the school as performing at a 4.

Assessments: Screening, progress monitoring, and other supporting assessments are used to inform data-based decision making.

Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Screening — <i>The RTI system accurately identifies students at risk of poor learning outcomes or challenging behaviors.</i>			
1. Screening Tools	<p>What tools do you use for universal screening (probe across content areas)?</p> <p>How much attention was given to the vendor’s evidence regarding the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the tools when selected?</p> <p>Does your school have documentation from the vendor that these tools have been shown to be valid, reliable, and accurate with subgroups in your school?</p> <p>Does staff understand how the tool is intended to be used?</p> <p>Can you or other staff provide evidence of the technical adequacy (i.e., reliability, validity, classification accuracy) of the tools?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification for rating</p>

Progress Monitoring—Ongoing and frequent monitoring of progress quantifies rates of improvement and informs instructional practice and the development of individualized programs. Measures are appropriate for the student’s grade and/or skill level.

Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Progress Monitoring Tools	<p>What tools does your school use for progress monitoring (probe across content areas)?</p> <p>Did school or district staff consider the evidence from the vendor regarding the validity, reliability, and accuracy of the progress monitoring tool(s) when selecting it/them?</p> <p>Does your school have documentation from the vendor that the tool(s) have been shown to be valid, reliable, and accurate with subgroups in your school?</p> <p>Can staff articulate the evidence supporting the rigor of the tool(s)?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
Progress Monitoring Process	<p>Describe the process used for monitoring progress.</p> <p>How often is the progress of students in secondary level interventions monitored?</p> <p>How often is the progress of students in intensive intervention monitored?</p> <p>Does monitoring occur with sufficient frequency to show a trend in academic progress over time?</p> <p>How closely does administration of the progress monitoring tool(s) follow the developer’s guidelines?</p> <p>To what extent is this process</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

	consistently followed?		
<i>Data-Based Decision-Making—Data-based decision-making processes are used to inform instruction, movement within the multilevel system, and disability identification (in accordance with state law).</i>			
Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Decision-Making Process	<p>Describe how decisions are made to move students between tiers.</p> <p>Who is involved in decision making?</p> <p>What data are used to inform those decisions, and how are they used?</p> <p>What criteria and guidelines are used for making decisions?</p> <p>To what extent are the screening, progress monitoring, and other assessment data used to inform instruction at all tiers, including the core instruction?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
Data System	<p>Is there a system for collecting and organizing student academic data, screening data, progress monitoring data, and other forms of data? If so, please describe.</p> <p>Is the system used consistently across school staff?</p> <p>Are instructional decisions made about students tracked in the data system or through another method (including movement between tiers)?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Responsiveness to Secondary and Intensive Levels of Intervention</p>	<p>Describe how decisions about responsiveness to secondary-level interventions or intensive intervention are made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are progress monitoring data used? ▪ How is baseline performance established? ▪ What goal setting method is used? (e.g., end-of-year benchmarks, rate of improvement, intra-individual framework? Are rates or norms provided by the vendor/developer? ▪ What decision rules are used? <p>Are the criteria implemented accurately and consistently?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
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Multilevel Instruction—The RTI framework includes a school-wide, multilevel system of instruction and interventions for preventing school failure. Commonly represented by the three-tiered triangle, multilevel instruction also is known as the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Primary-Level Instruction/Core Curriculum (Tier I)			
Research-Based Curriculum Materials	<p>Describe primary-level instruction (core curriculum) materials.</p> <p>What is the research base?</p> <p>When your school selected its core instructional materials, how much attention was paid to the research base?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
Articulation of Teaching and Learning (in and across grade levels)	<p>Describe the process that supports the articulation of teaching and learning from one grade to another.</p> <p>Describe the process that supports the articulation of teaching and learning among teachers in the same grade.</p> <p>How consistent is the learning experience among students in the same grade and subject with different teachers?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Differentiated Instruction</p>	<p>To what extent do teachers in this school use student assessment data and knowledge of student readiness, language, and culture to offer students in the same class different teaching and learning strategies to address student needs?</p> <p>How consistent is this effort among the teaching staff?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Standards-Based</p>	<p>To what extent is the core curriculum in reading and mathematics aligned to state standards?</p> <p>Are the instructional materials aligned to the standards? Are model or sample lessons and activities that demonstrate effective teaching of the standards available to teachers?</p> <p>Have teachers been trained in the content of the standards and in how to use that content within their lessons?</p> <p>Are teachers utilizing their training and aligning their instruction to these standards?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Exceeding Benchmark</p>	<p>Are programs and activities provided to enrich or augment the curriculum for students exceeding benchmarks? If so, please describe.</p> <p>Are any of these programs and activities available above and beyond the core instruction?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Secondary-Level Intervention (Tier II)</p>			
<p>Evidence-Based Intervention</p>	<p>What program(s) does your school use for secondary-level intervention?</p> <p>How were these programs selected?</p> <p>Have these programs demonstrated efficacy with the target populations (e.g., has research shown that the interventions positively impact student achievement)?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Complements Core Instruction</p>	<p>How do instructors of secondary-level interventions ensure that the content they address is well aligned and complements the core instruction for each student?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Instructional Characteristics</p>	<p>Are the secondary level interventions always led by staff adequately trained to implement the interventions with fidelity?</p> <p>If not, who provides the secondary level intervention and what is their background?</p> <p>Are the secondary interventions always conducted with small groups of students?</p> <p>What is the maximum group size?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Addition to Primary</p>	<p>Are secondary-level interventions (i.e., Tier II) always implemented as supplements to the core curriculum?</p> <p>If not, please explain.</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

Intensive Intervention — <i>Individualized with a focus on the academic needs of students with disabilities and those significantly below grade level (Tier III)</i>			
<p>Data-Based Interventions Adapted Based on Student Need</p>	<p>How are evidence-based interventions intensified or individualized at the intensive level?</p> <p>How are the interventions used at this level developed?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Instructional Characteristics</p>	<p>Who provides intensive intervention? Can you describe their background and level of training in providing data-based individualized instruction?</p> <p>Does the group size allow for the interventionist to adjust and individualize instruction to address the needs of each student?</p> <p>Describe an example of a student experiencing intensive intervention.</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

Relationship to Primary	<p>Are intensive interventions always implemented as supplements to the core curriculum?</p> <p>If not, please explain.</p> <p>How do you decide if a student receiving intensive intervention should remain in primary-level instruction?</p> <p>How do you ensure meaningful connections between intensive intervention and the general education curriculum (e.g., the Common Core)?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
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<i>Infrastructure and Support Mechanisms—Knowledge, resources, and organizational structures necessary to operationalize all components of RTI in a unified system to meet the established goals.</i>			
Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Prevention Focus	<p>To what extent do you believe the teaching staff views the purpose of RTI as primarily to prevent students from having academic and/or behavioral problems?</p> <p>What portion of the teaching staff view RTI as primarily a means for special education identification?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Leadership Personnel</p>	<p>To what extent are the school and district administrators aware of the RTI framework at your school?</p> <p>To what extent do the actions taken and decisions made by district administrators improve the effectiveness of the RTI framework at your school?</p> <p>To what extent do the actions taken and decisions made by school administrators improve the effectiveness of the RTI framework at your school?</p> <p>Does your school have a designated person who oversees and manages RTI implementation? If yes, what percentage of that person's time is devoted to overseeing and managing RTI?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>School-Based Professional Development</p>	<p>Has the staff been trained on the RTI framework and essential components?</p> <p>How often is refresher or new training provided?</p> <p>Is RTI training provided to new teachers?</p> <p>What ongoing professional development is made available for those who provide secondary-level and intensive intervention?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Schedules</p>	<p>Does the schedule reflect additional time beyond the core for secondary-level and intensive intervention?</p> <p>Is there time scheduled for teacher collaboration on instruction and interventions?</p> <p>Are all the pertinent teachers and interventionists available for these collaborative meetings?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Are there adequate materials, programs, and resources allocated to support interventions, assessments, professional development, staffing?</p> <p>Do the programs and materials match the needs of the students at each tier?</p> <p>Is there a process for monitoring the use of resources?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness</p>	<p>What efforts have been made to ensure that core instruction, secondary-level and intensive intervention, and assessments take into account cultural and linguistic factors?</p> <p>How are the demographic and academic data of subgroups represented in your school used to inform the RTI framework?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>Communications With and Involvement of Parents</p>	<p>Are parents knowledgeable about the RTI framework in your school?</p> <p>Describe how you communicate with parents about RTI and student performance.</p> <p>How are parents involved in decision making regarding the participation of their child in secondary-level or intensive intervention?</p> <p>How are parents of students at the secondary or intensive level informed of the progress of their children?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

<p>Communication With and Involvement of All Staff</p>	<p>Are teachers in your school knowledgeable about the RTI framework?</p> <p>Describe how you communicate with teachers about the school's RTI plan.</p> <p>How are teachers of students at the secondary or intensive level informed of their progress in the intervention?</p> <p>What process does your school use to ensure teacher collaboration in implementing RTI?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
<p>RTI Teams</p>	<p>Does your school have an RTI team? If so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who composes that team? ▪ How often does the team meet? ▪ Are there established processes and protocols that help the team work effectively? What are they? <p>How does the team communicate and collaborate with other staff?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

Fidelity and Evaluation—System for collecting and analyzing data to measure fidelity and effectiveness of the RTI model.

Item	Sample Interview Questions	Comments/Remarks	Ratings
Fidelity	<p>Are procedures in place to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the core curriculum? Of secondary-level and intensive intervention? Of screening, progress monitoring, and the decision-making process? If so please describe.</p> <p>Who is involved in monitoring the fidelity of implementation?</p> <p>Does the evidence indicate that instruction, interventions, assessments, and decisions are implemented with fidelity?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>
Evaluation	<p>How is RTI evaluated at your school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is a plan in place for evaluation? ▪ Is a process in place for reviewing student-level data for all students and for subgroups of students? ▪ Is a process in place to evaluate implementation fidelity? <p>How are evaluation data used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are teachers and interventionists involved in giving and receiving feedback on the effectiveness of the programs and materials? <p>Who is involved in evaluating RTI implementation?</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>Evidence Sources</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Rating: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</p> <p>Justification of Rating</p>

Office of Educational Quality & Accountability

840 Research Parkway, Suite 455
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
Tel: (405) 522-5399
www.oega.ok.gov

